AiAiAi

No Website...
No MIRC...
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If you found these, then you already know where to look.

Remember!!
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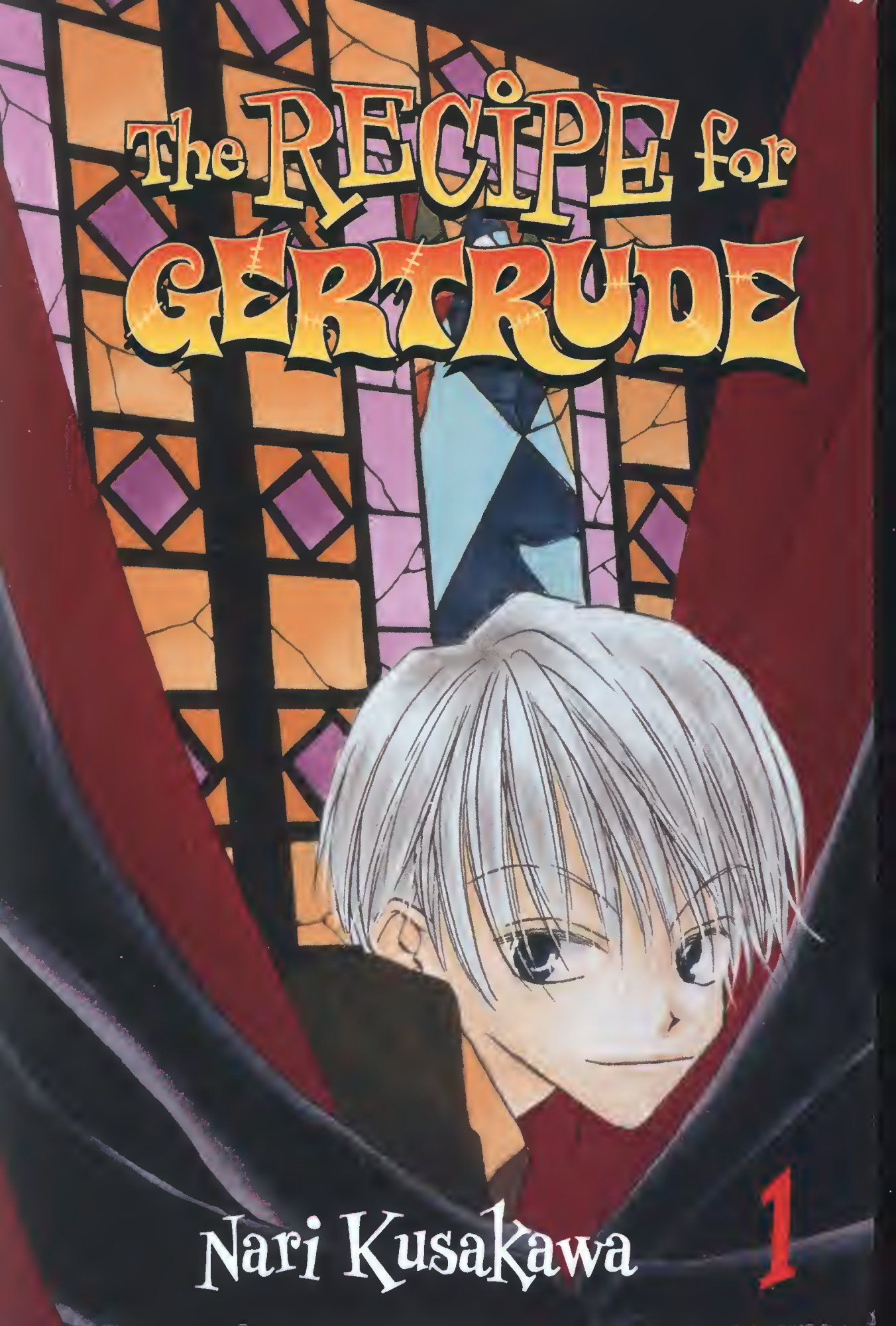
The RECIPE for GERTRUDE
Nari Kusakawa
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The RECIPE for GERTRUDE

By Nari Kusakawa

Volume 1

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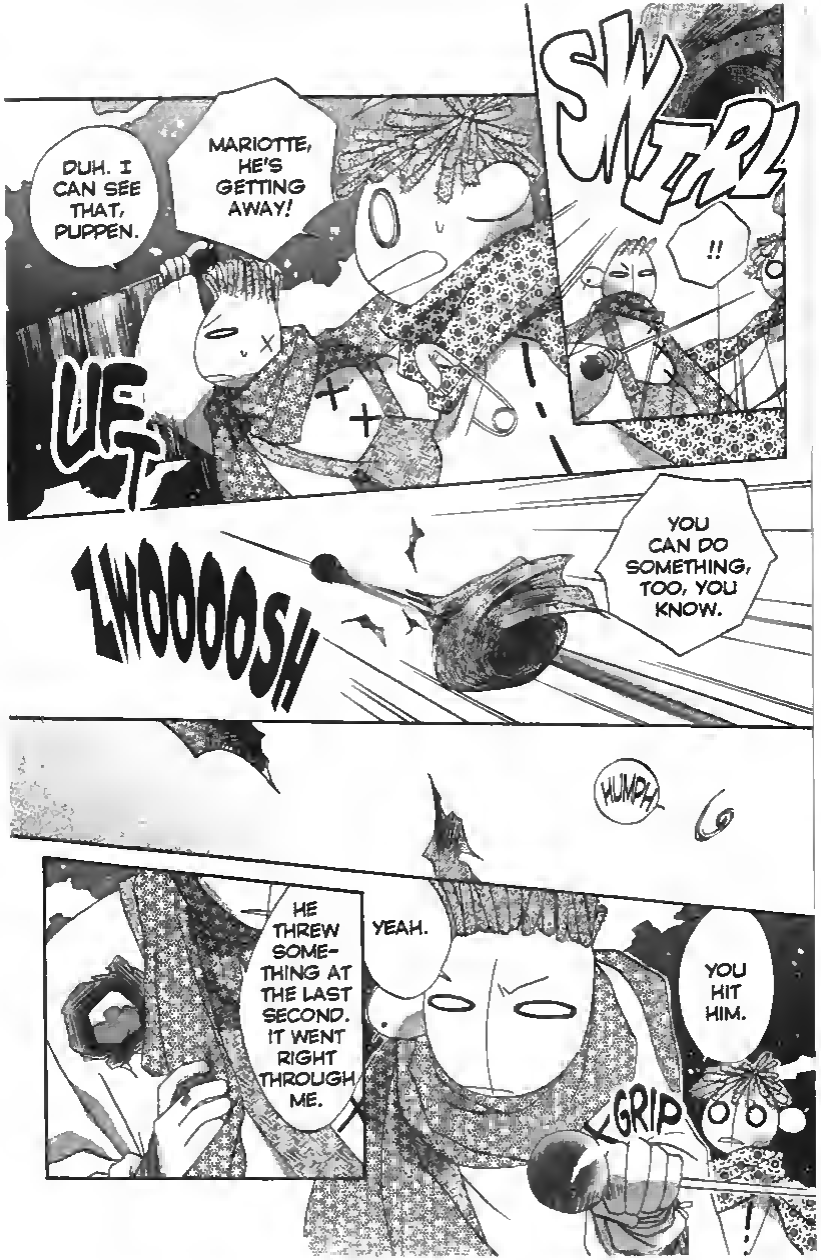
FORGET IT.
GRAB
BESIDES, WHEN DID I ASK YOU FOR YOUR OPINION ANYWAY, MARIOTTE?
XXXX
LOOK AT YOU. YOU'RE A JOKE-- NOTHING BUT A STUPID PUPPET.
PUPPET
SEE IF YOU CAN, PUPPEN.
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE A REJECT.
WINK
I AIN'T INTERESTED IN BEING PIGEONHOLED.
TAP TAP
I AM WHAT I AM.
THEY'RE MINE NOW!
FLAP
TUG
TUG TUG
GIVE BACK OUR EARS!
TUG

OUR EARS.
FORGET IT.
DO I LOOK LIKE I'M EVEN GONNA LISTEN TO YOU CLOWNS?
YOU'LL HAVE TO KILL ME FIRST.
ENOUGH ALREADY.
WE'VE CHASED YOU ACROSS AN OCEAN.
IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU GAVE THEM BACK.
IT'S LIKE WE SAID.
WE INTEND TO.
YOU'RE NOTHING.
WE DON'T CONSIDER YOU A REAL DEMON.
STOP BEING SO MOUTHY, YOU SORRY PATCHWORK.
XXX

HUMPH
HE HAS TO DO THIS EVERY TIME?
HE CAN'T EVEN THROW A ROCK? HOW PATHETIC.
MANAGED TO HIT ME, THOUGH
HE'S JUST A PATCH-WORK.
MANAGED TO HIT YOU, THOUGH
A ROCK?
YEAH. HEXED WITH HIS BLOOD EVEN.
IT WAS A ROCK.
SEE?
HE CAN CONTROL OBJECTS IF THEY HAVE HIS BLOOD ON THEM.
Frailty, thy name is stone.
FRAILTY, THY NAME IS STONE.
HE'S SAYING, "YOU'RE WEAK, SO OBEY MY COMMAND."
HE COULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN VERY FAR.
WE'LL CATCH UP TO YOU.
SOON ENOUGH, GER-TRUDE. SOON ENOUGH.


DUH. I CAN SEE THAT, PUPPEN.
MARIOTTE, HE'S GETTING AWAY!
SWERL
!!
WHOOOOSH
YOU CAN DO SOMETHING, TOO, YOU KNOW.
HUMPH
HE THREW SOME-THING AT THE LAST SECOND. IT WENT RIGHT THROUGH ME.
YEAH.
YOU HIT HIM.
GRIP

OH, YEAH. MY HAT.
CREAK
STAY POSI-TIVE.
I WONDER IF I DROPPED IT IN THE YARD.
WAUGH!
JUMP
JUST KEEP LOOK-ING FOR-WARD.
NEVER LOOK BACK.
HUH?
OOOOO
WHA
OW!
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE SEEN ANY-BODY HERE.
UM... <HOW ARE YOU?>
A FOREIGN-ER?
IT'S NOT "HOW ARE YOU?" YOU IDIOT!
WHAT'S SHE DOING CUTTING THROUGH HERE?

DAY IN, DAY OUT, I'M AL-WAYS ON THE RUN.
IT'S BEEN THAT WAY SINCE I WAS BORN.
HUH?
LIGHTS OUT AL-READY?
THERE'S THE RECIPE TO WORRY ABOUT.
SO, IT'S BEST I RECUPER-ATE HERE-- NOT THAT I WANT TO.
NO ONE WILL EVER BOTHER ME HERE.
MIND YOU, THIS PLACE IS ABAN-DONED.
DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD BE.
IT'S TRUE. THERE IS NO REST FOR THE WICKED.
BUT MAN, IT REALLY HURTS.
I MUST'VE BEEN BORN UNDER A BAD SIGN.
IT HASN'T REGEN-ERATED YET.
EVERY DAY'S A CHAL-LENGE
IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH.
TSH
TSH
TSH
TSH

I HEARD IT WAS HERE, SO I CAME ALL THE WAY TO JAPAN.
DO YOU KNOW RICH PEOPLE OR COLLECTORS INTO THE OCCULT?
AH... NO.
THE OCCULT?
WHAT KIND OF RECIPE, THOUGH?
UMM, HOW TO PUT IT?
WELL, I GUESS IT'S A MAD SCIENTIST'S EXPERI-MENTAL RECIPE.
Burn it
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO WHEN YOU FIND IT?
EXPERI-MENTAL?
THIS GUY'S STARTING TO GIVE ME THE CREEPS.
YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING THEN?
I GUESS IT WASN'T GONNA BE THAT EASY, IT?
OH, I SEE. I THINK
SO.. I WANT TO GET RID OF IT.
FOR SOME REASON, PEOPLE COME AFTER ME BECAUSE OF IT.
IT DISAP-PEARED WHEN THE ORIGINAL OWNER DIED.

NOT SO FAST.
GOOD THING YOU WEREN'T HURT.
SEE YA!
PAT
PAT
WHAT? WHAT?
NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, SOME-THING'S DEFINITELY MISSING.
TO TOP IT OFF, IT'S PURPLE. I WONDER WHY.
MAYBE IT'S ONE OF THOSE..
WHAT D'YA KNOW.
YOU'RE GOOD AT JAPA-NESE.
WERE YOU HURT AT ALL?
JUST ONE THING.
A QUES-TION, IN FACT.
THE WORD "RECIPE." DOES IT MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?
YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE A COOK TO ME.
RECIPE? AS IN COOKING?

OH, YEAH?
YOU'LL NEVER REMEMBER IT, THOUGH!
BE GONE!
WHAT THE--?!
WHOOOOSH
SIZZZZZ
LE.

CLOP
I'M SUPPOSED TO TRUST SOMEONE I'VE JUST MET?
THEN I DON'T HAVE A USE FOR YOU ANYMORE.
FAIR'S FAIR.
I GET TO ASK YOU A QUESTION.
AS YOU CAN SEE, I HAVE MY OWN LITTLE PROBLEMS.
CLOP
GULP
I GUESS... A DEMON.
YOU'RE NOT A HUMAN. SO, WHAT ARE YOU?
IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS I DON'T WANT ANY ATTENTION.
CLOP
EVEN IF I SAID I WOULDN'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT YOU?

SALT
THEN, HERE!
A SINGLE SHAKE?
POOOOOUR
AIEEEEEEE
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
PRETENDING NOT TO LOOK
LOOK WHO'S TALKING.
IT WAS IN SELF-DEFENSE.
I WAS ONLY GONNA CAST A SPELL, SO YOU'D FORGET MEETING ME!
SAY WHAT?
LIKE I SAID... ...A SPELL.
THAT'S OVER-KILL
ARE YOU A MON-STER?
ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL ME?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? EVEN A HUMAN WOULD SCREAM IF YOU POURED SALT ON A WOUND!

SALT?!
SALT
FROM THE STORE
HMPH
YOU CAME PRE-PARED. AND, YOU'RE PRETTY GUTSY.
TOTER
SIZZZZZZZ
YOU'RE RIGHT. I DON'T LIKE SALT.
BUT, A SINGLE SHAKE ISN'T GOING TO DO ANYTHING!
DASH!!
!!
WORKS PRETTY GOOD.
SALT IS KNOWN TO PURIFY.
I HAD NOTHING TO LOSE.
GRAB
SO, TOO BAD!
I CAN'T

YOU DON'T KNOW VERY MUCH.
SURE, I WASN'T BORN GREAT, BUT I'M GOING TO BE.
THAT'S ALL THE MORE REASON I WANNA DO THINGS MY WAY.
RUSTLE RUSTLE
I TAKE IT TO SCHOOL FOR COOKING CLASS.
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
YOU TOOK OFF MY CLOTHES, TOO.
DO YOU ALWAYS CARRY SALT AROUND?
HUMPH!
YOU'RE PROBABLY NOT VERY POWERFUL THEN.
HM. NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A NAME.
GERTRUDE.
I'VE HEARD OF MEPHISTO II
YOU WOULDN'T KNOW WOULD YOU?
HEH. HEH.
GLEAM
MAKE FUN OF ME AND YOU'LL GET HURT.
I HAVE MY PRIDE.
STATUS AIN'T MY THING.
LET'S BANDAGE THAT UP.
YOUR ARM, PLEASE.
YEAH, YEAH.
ANYWAY, SOMETHING NEEDS DOING.
DON'T CALL ME A WORM!
YOU'RE ALWAYS SAYING STUFF YOU DON'T HAVE TO.
EVEN A WORM WILL TURN.
THAT MEANS, YOU WERE MADE FUN OF A LOT.

GLOOP
GLOOP GLOOP
GLOOP GLOOP GLOOP
GLOOP GLOOP GLOOP
SIZZZZZZ
SLUMP
HM, RIGHT
A SPELL.
... SORRY!
IT'S FREEZING.
OH.
GLOOP GLOOP
YOU'RE UP.
THANK GOODNESS. I WASHED THE SALT OFF.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT. YOU'RE A MONSTER, TOO.
BUWA HA HA HA HA
BUTooo
HEY...
...DON'T I LOOK DANGEROUS?
I COULDN'T JUST LEAVE YOU, COULD I?
YOU'RE STILL HERE?
WRONG. A NORMAL PERSON WOULD'VE RUN.

WHAT A WEIRD GIRL.
ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO SEW THAT SLEEVE.
IT NEEDS A WASH
BYE.
JUST GO.
HURRY UP.
GET LOST.
THERE. FINISHED.
.....
I DIDN'T ASK YOU TO.
I JUST NEED IT SO I CAN BLACKLIST YOU.
I'M NOT GONNA USE IT, STUPID
IT HURTS MORE WHEN YOU'RE AROUND.
HOW COME IT'S ME WHO HAS TO GET UPSET?
SORRY
NOT SINCERE
ARE YOU UPSET? YOU CAN CALL ME ANYTHING YOU WANT, YOU KNOW.
I WANTED TO SIT AND TALK MORE, BUT THAT'S OKAY.
TAKE CARE, GERTRUDE.
I GUESS I'D BETTER GET GOING THEN.
UH-HUH. GO AWAY.

I HAD TO BUY MORE SALT, SO I BOUGHT THESE, TOO.
I WAS WORRIED, YOU KNOW?
WHY DO YOU HAVE THAT ANYWAY?
POUT
IT'LL HEAL ON ITS OWN.
WHAT D'YA THINK YOU'RE DOING?!
THERE!
CAUGHT YOU NAPPING.
UM... HEY.
SUSUGI SAHARA. FRIENDS GENERALLY CALL ME 'SAHARA'
WHAT'S YOUR NAME?

I KNEW SHE WASN'T INTO DOLLS.
HMM...
I GET IT.
THUD THUD THUD THUD
GERTRUDE, HELP ME!
THERE WERE THESE TWO WEIRDOES!
THEY WERE LOOKING FOR YOU! I WAS SCARED!
SCARED? YOU? PUPPEN AND MARIOTTE?
I THOUGHT IT WAS ODD.
I'M TOO YOUNG TO DIE!
HUG

I GUESS IT WAS TRUE.
SOMEONE SAID A TAILOR OR A DESIGNER USED TO LIVE HERE.
AND THAT THERE WERE A LOT OF MANNEQUINS.
FIRST TIME I'VE BEEN INSIDE.
I DIDN'T NOTICE THEM WHEN I WAS DRAGGING GERTRUDE IN.
MANNEQUINS IN EMPTY HOUSES SURE ARE CREEPY.
CREEPY.
I'M NOT MYSELF WITH YOU AROUND.
LET'S GO.
SOMEONE SAID MY NAME WITHOUT THREATENING ME.
WHEN'S THE LAST TIME SOMEBODY DID THAT?
GRUNT
GRUNT GRUNT

NO.
YOU DON'T KNOW WHO HE REALLY IS?
GERTRUDE?
SPRINKLE
HUMPH.
WHAT ARE THESE PEOPLE-- OR WHATEVER THEY ARE-- ON ABOUT? EARS?
WE HAVE HER HOSTAGE, BUT YOU'RE STILL GONNA KEEP THEM?
THEN I'LL TELL YOU.
HOW? ACCIDENTS, FOR ONE. BATTLES. EVEN FIRE.
LOST
WE'RE DEMONS, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE'RE ALWAYS LUCKY.
SOMETIMES WE LOSE BODY PARTS.
LOST
100 YEARS AGO, THAT IS.
THERE USED TO BE A HUMAN WHO COLLECTED BODY PARTS.
ANYWAY, THERE'S LOTS OF WAYS TO LOSE BODY PARTS.

WHAT A LAME ATTEMPT.
CRACK!
THUD
BUT I MADE IT LOOK JUST LIKE HER.
YOU DIDN'T LIKE IT?
PLOP
MAKING HUMAN FRIENDS AGAIN, I SEE.
YOU'RE AN EMBARRASSMENT TO DEMONS.
HUGH
CAN'T GET RID OF OLD HABITS, CAN YOU?
LOOK WHAT WE FOUND, PATCHWORK.
WE CAME TO RETURN THEM.
SNAP
WE DIDN'T THINK YOU'D GET VERY FAR.

THAT MEANS, THE RECIPE IS FOR...
AN EXPERI-MENT? A DEMON? MANMADE?

SOME-THING LIKE THAT.
THAT'S WHY THEY WANT THEM BACK.
FIG-URES.
THESE EARS REALLY DID BELONG TO THEM.
YUP. IT'S HOW TO MAKE ME.
SPARKLE GLITTER
UH... YEAH.
I'M DEFINITELY IN TROUBLE HERE, AREN'T I?
WE'RE NOT FRIENDS ENOUGH FOR YOU TO HELP ME, ARE WE?

THIS ONE PERSON WAS PARTICU-LARLY GOOD AT COLLECTING PARTS.
BUT, COLLECTING WASN'T SATISFYING ENOUGH.
SO HE DECIDED TO CONDUCT AN EXPERIMENT.
WHAT KIND?
THE KIND INVOLVING HIS COLLECTION
HE WANTED TO SEE IF HE COULD CREATE A NEW DEMON
THAT ABOMINATION IS THE RESULT.
HE'S A MANMADE DEMON

This is my first regular series. I got a lot of lucky breaks along the way. For the past two to three years, I was really worried about where my life was headed. But, here's the upshot of my efforts.

That said, there were two things I wanted to do when I got my own series. First, I wanted numbered asides, like this quarter page. Ta-da!
So far, so good. Second, I wanted to list manga artist as my profession.
I figured I'd be able to call myself a professional manga artist if I managed to release a book. But...I don't think I've paid enough dues yet, so I'm really not comfortable calling myself one yet.

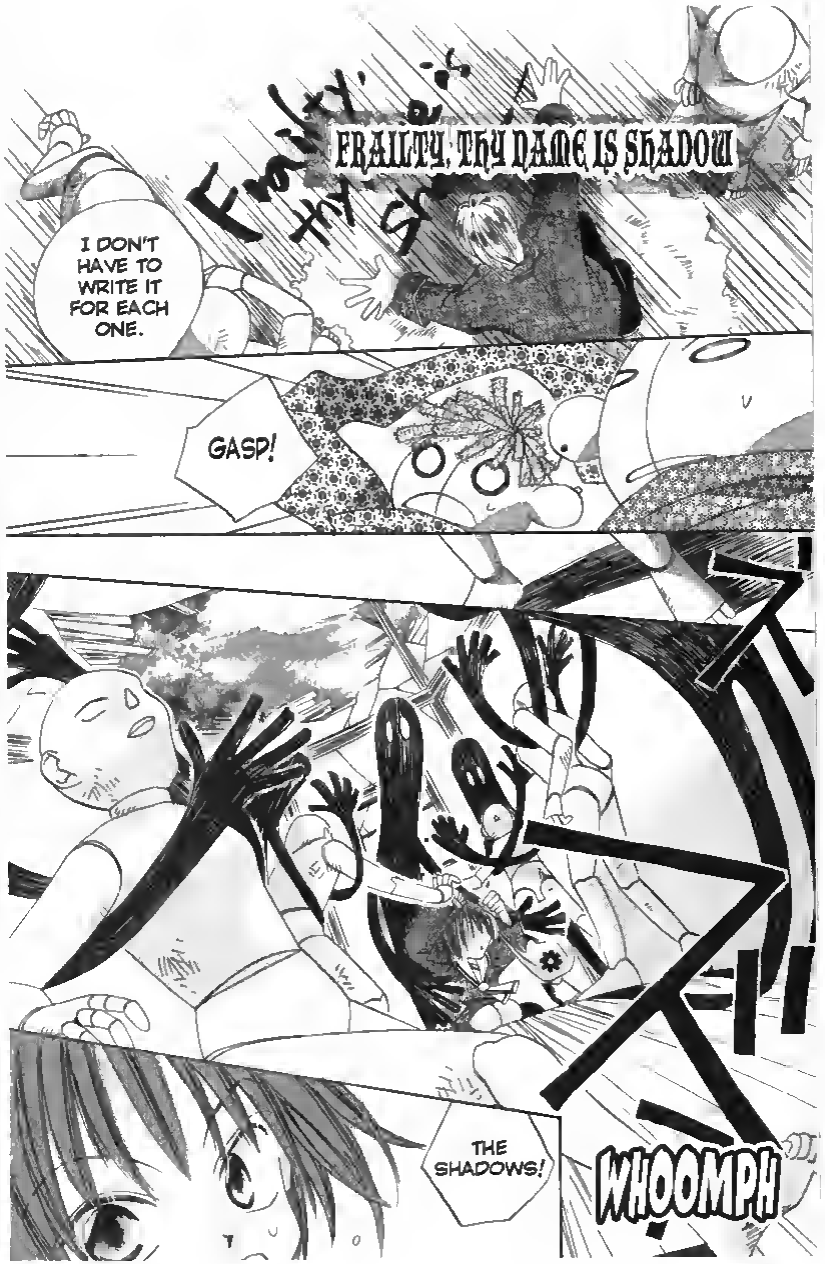
!!
HUFF HUFF HUFF
THOSE DEMONS ALWAYS LIKED INHABITING DOLLS.
GRRR GRRR
THE MANNEQUINS!
THEY CAN EASILY CONTROL THEM.
RISE...
THAT WHIRLY THING YOU DID
LET'S ESCAPE LIKE BEFORE.
CAN'T.
THEY'RE TOO CLOSE THEY'LL CATCH US.
I NEED TO SAVE MY POWERS FOR NOW.
WITH THOSE EARS, ISN'T THAT A GIVEN?
PROBABLY?
I'LL SETTLE IT HERE.
OTHERWISE, THEY'LL PROBABLY CHASE US.

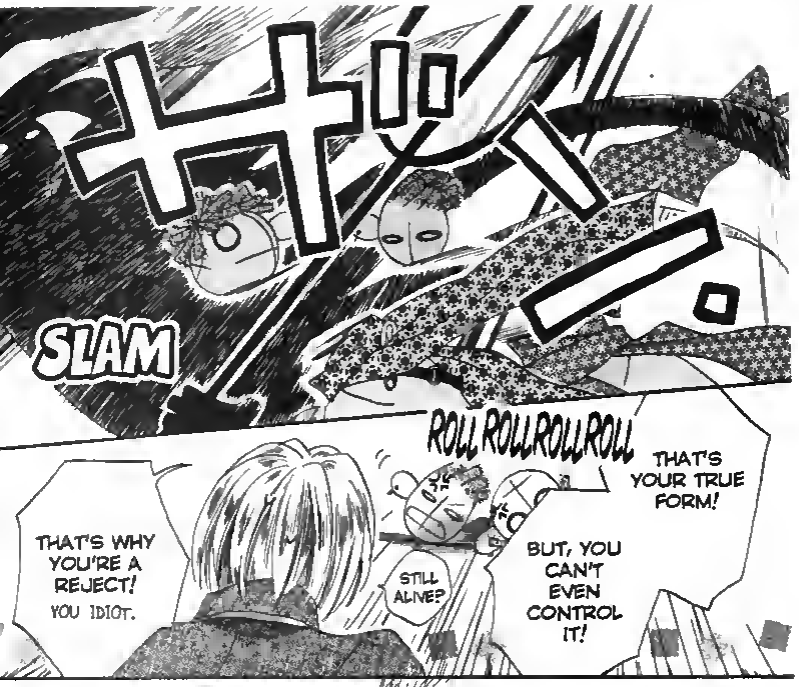
OW OW OW
WOW.
LOOK AT 'EM ALL. SOME NUTCASE MUSTVE LIVED HERE
THIS WAS PROBABLY THE WORKSHOP.
I COULDN'T EVEN LEAVE THE GROUNDS.
I MUST BE WEAKER THAN I THOUGHT.
HMM
BANG RATTLE RATTLE
CRASH
NOT GOOD
WAS THIS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING? THE ROOF.
LET'S GO.
IT ISN'T SAFE.
HUH?
GRAB
CRAWL
WE'RE SURROUNDED!
WE'RE OUTNUMBERED.

JUMP!
GONNA WASTE EACH MANNEQUIN WITH A MAGIC ROCK?
WANNA SEE?
FOR PEACE OF MIND?
SHE'LL BE DEAD BEFORE THAT.
SNAP!
NOW WHAT, PATCH-WORK?
THE MANNE-QUINS CAN EASILY BREAK THROUGH CHARMS LIKE THAT.
NOW!
TOSS
Good job!
I'M GLAD THE ROOF WAS MISSING.

AS IF!
I KNEW YOU'D SAY THAT.
HEY, SA-HARA.
SPRIN-KLE SALT AROUND YOU. IT'S BETTER THAN NOTHING.
THROW SOME MY WAY WHEN I SAY THE WORD
YOU BET.
I'LL DO BETTER THAN THAT EVEN.
OW
JUST A NORMAL AMOUNT, THANK YOU.
WHUMP!
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
YOU'RE DOING THIS FOR ME?
SUCKER
I GET IRRITATED JUST LOOKING AT YOU.
!
YOU LIKE HUMANS THAT MUCH?
THUNK

DEMONS' SHADOWS ARE DIFFERENT!
THEY REFLECT THEIR MASTERS' TRUE APPEARANCES!
AH, GEE.
THAT MEANS THAT'S GERTRUDE'S REAL APPEARANCE?
WOW.
THAT'S MET DOWNER
YOU DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT?!
ZUVVVVV
CURSE HIM!
GET BACK! I AM YOUR MASTER!
OBEY ME!
COOL, I CAN TELL WHICH IS WHICH.
OF COURSE!
HEE HEE
THEY LOOK STUPID, JUST LIKE THE ORIGINAL.


FRAILTY, THY NAME IS SHADOW
I DON'T HAVE TO WRITE IT FOR EACH ONE.
GASP!
THE SHADOWS!
WHOOMPH


SLAM
ROLL ROLL ROLL ROLL
THAT'S YOUR TRUE FORM!
THAT'S WHY YOU'RE A REJECT! YOU IDIOT.
STILL ALIVE?
BUT, YOU CAN'T EVEN CONTROL IT!

HOW HARSH, THOUGH.
YOU FINALLY MADE A FRIEND.
BUT, YOU'RE GONNA KILL HER AT THIS RATE.♡
THE SALT!
Pssh

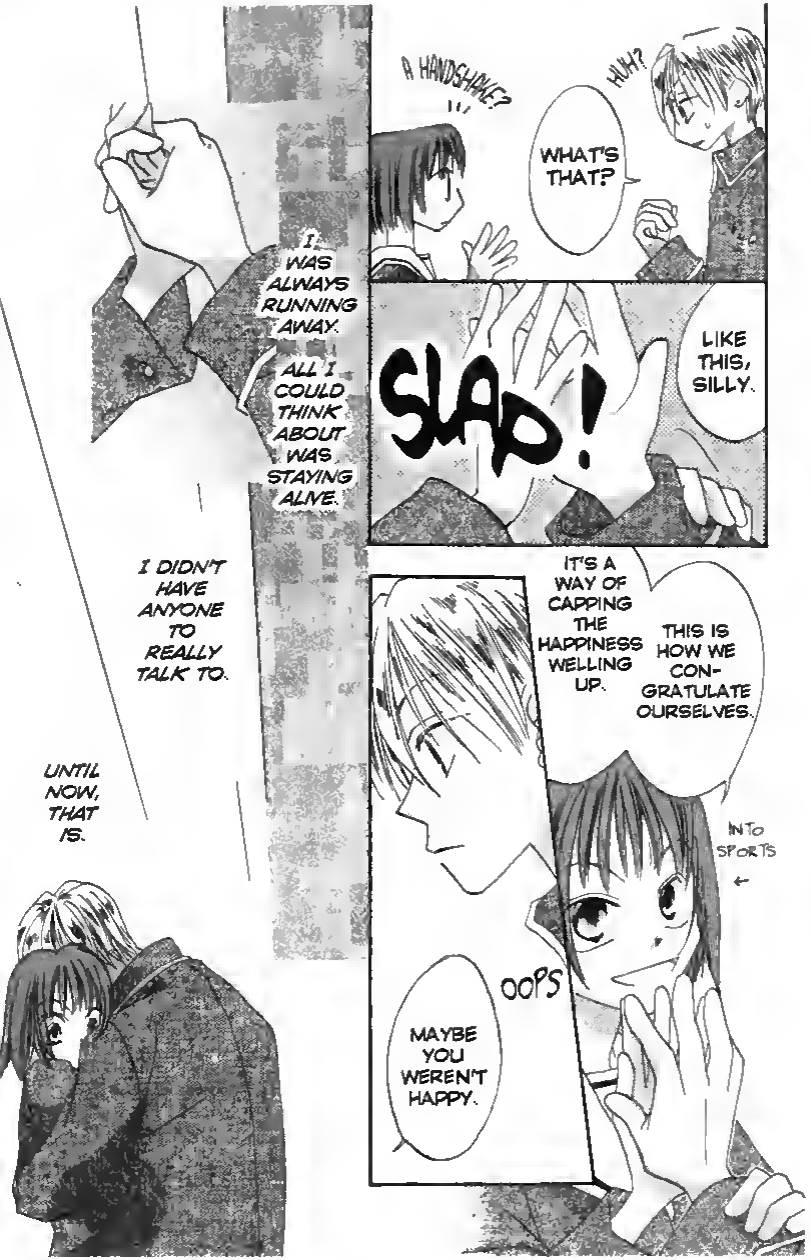
ALTEEF
IT'S LIKE WE SAID.
HE'S MADE UP OF CHOICE PARTS OF POWERFUL DEMONS.
SO, HIS POTENTIAL POWERS ARE INCREDIBLE! WHAT DID YOU EXPECT?!
PRETTY AWE-SOME.
WAUGH!
WHO...?
PUPPEN!
MARIOTTE!
I CAN'T CONTROL IT!
IT LOOKS PRETTY MEAN, THOUGH.
BOOOOOM
VOOOOM

I DON'T CARE WHO'S CONTROLLING YOU.
NOW THAT YOU'RE HERE, YOU LISTEN TO ME.
I HAVE NOTHING TO GIVE YOU.
SIGH
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE THE WAY YOU'RE MADE...
...BUT YOU GOT ALL EGOTISTICAL. LOOK AT THIS MESS.
NOT IN THE LEAST
ROLL ROLL
MAYBE NOW YOU'LL THINK ABOUT WHO YOU REALLY ARE.
THROW
WHAM
THWK
YOWL
I'M THE KING OF MY HILL.
YOU OWE ME.
FORGET IT!

SAHARA!
HER SHADOW'S PINNED
SHE CAN'T GET AWAY NOW.
THAT DIRTY DEVIL!
IT WENT RIGHT FOR MY INJURED ARM THE SECOND IT SAW ME.
DEEP DOWN, I'M PROBABLY DESPICABLE.
DOES THAT MEAN YOU WANNA BE MY FRIEND?
I'M POSITIVE YOU'RE NICE.
YOU SAVED ME AGAIN.
ARE YOU SCARED OF ME NOW?
REGRET THAT YOU EVER LAUGHED AT ME?

HE'S GIVING UP?!
HE PUT HIS HAND OUT!
FRAILTY...
Frailty, thy name is Gertrude.
SQUISH
THE REAL ME?
IT'S PART OF ME TO BEGIN WITH.
I WILL CONTROL YOU.
...THY NAME IS GERTRUDE.

EITHER WAY, HE'S IN TROUBLE!
HE THINKS IT'S JUST HIMSELF!
WAUGH! HE PROVOKED IT!
YOU'LL HAVE TO BEAT ME IF YOU WANT TO BE FREE!
THE SHADOW'S GONNA POSSESS HIM!
BOOOM
LIKE I SAID, I HAVE MY PRIDE!

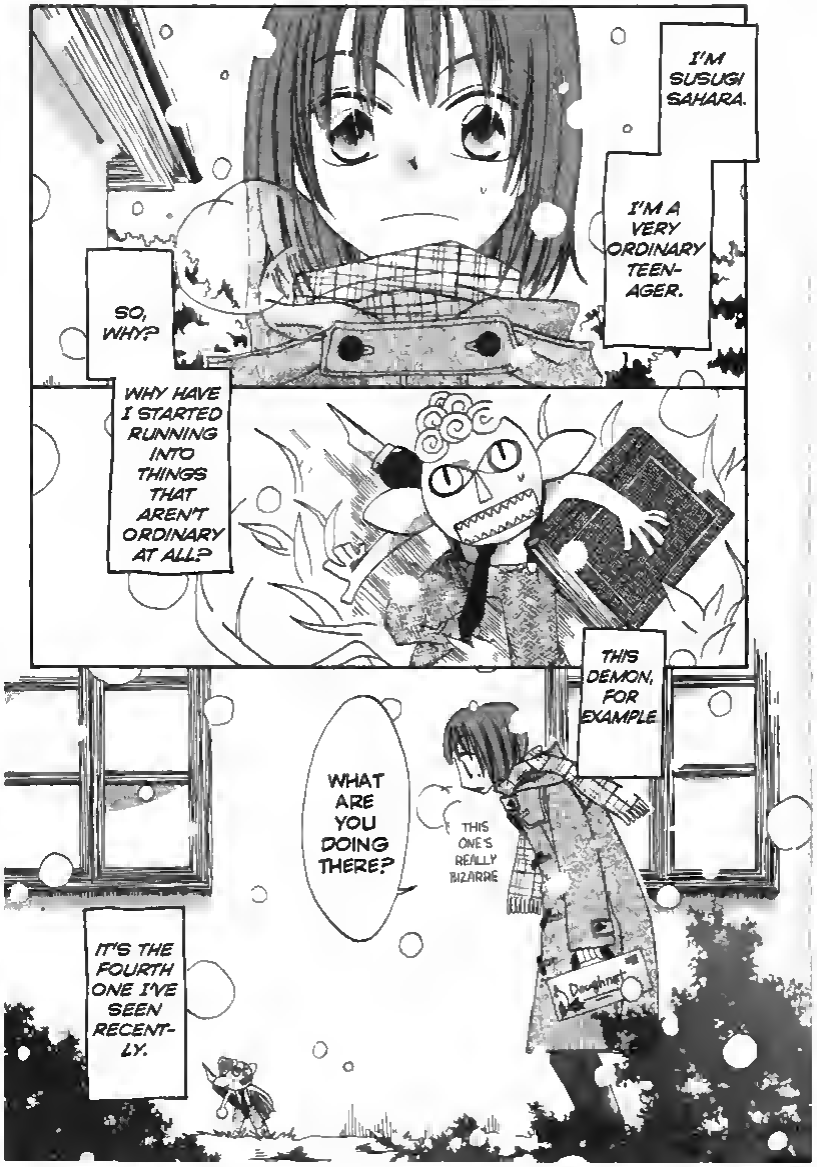

I WAS ALWAYS RUNNING AWAY.
ALL I COULD THINK ABOUT WAS STAYING ALIVE.
I DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE TO REALLY TALK TO.
UNTIL NOW, THAT IS.
A HANDSHAKE?!
HUH?
WHAT'S THAT?
SLAP!
LIKE THIS, SILLY.
IT'S A WAY OF CAPPING THE HAPPINESS WELLING UP.
THIS IS HOW WE CONGRATULATE OURSELVES.
INTO SPORTS
OOPS
MAYBE YOU WEREN'T HAPPY.

PHEW
I JUST REMEMBERED.
DO YOU STILL WANT YOUR EARS BACK?
FULLY CONFIDENT!
WHOMP!
HE TOTALLY CRUSHED IT!
PATCHWORK WINS!
IT'S A TOTAL UPSET.
IN FACT, MORE THAN ENOUGH!
TRITON
PUPPET?
<HUMI-OZ>
ONE'S ENOUGH!
UP
YOU DID IT.
I REALLY AM GLAD I WASN'T KILLED BY THESE CLOWNS.
IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE TO BE TOO CHOICE?

The RECIPE for GERTRUDE
Chapter 2

GEE.
YOU WERE HAPPY THEN.
SHUT UP.
I AM HAPPY FOR A CHANGE.
IT'S NICE, YET... INTENSE IN A WAY.
I'M SO GLAD IT WORKED OUT.
MAYBE I CAN FINALLY FIND SOME PEACE.
FIDGET
NO FIDGETING
FIDGET

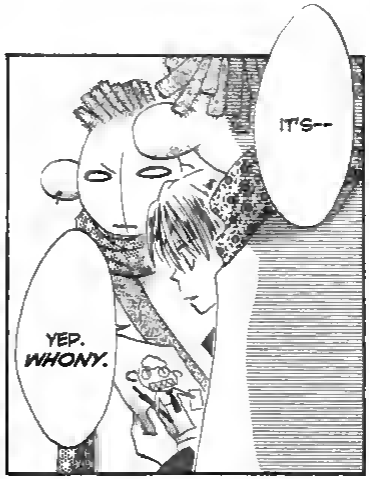
A LONG TIME AGO, THERE WAS A MAN WHO COLLECTED THE BODY PARTS OF DEMONS.
IF THAT WEREN'T ENOUGH, HE PUT THEM TOGETHER AND CREATED A COMPLETELY NEW DEMON.
CRAZY, HUH?
I'M ALLOWED TO COME AND GO AS I PLEASE.
THAT, I'LL KEEP A SECRET.
I JUST WALKED IN-- LIKE I ALWAYS DO.
ME? MORE LIKE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, HUMAN?
SOMEONE'S CAST A CLOAKING SPELL ON THIS HOUSE, SO IT WON'T ATTRACT ATTENTION.
HOW DID YOU GET PAST THE SPELL?
ANY-WAY...
...I'M WORKING ON AN EXPOSÉ.
I GET THE FEELING YOU'VE SEEN MY KIND BEFORE.
IS THERE SOME-THING HERE?
YOU WOULD-N'T KNOW.
IT'S ABOUT A MAN-MADE DEMON.
NO SENSE IN ASKING YOU, THOUGH.
AS IN A SCOOP?
GASP


I'M SUSUGI SAHARA.
I'M A VERY ORDINARY TEEN-AGER.
SO, WHY?
WHY HAVE I STARTED RUNNING INTO THINGS THAT AREN'T ORDINARY AT ALL?
THIS DEMON, FOR EXAMPLE
WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE?
THIS ONE'S REALLY BIZARRE
A Daughter
IT'S THE FOURTH ONE I'VE SEEN RECENT-LY.

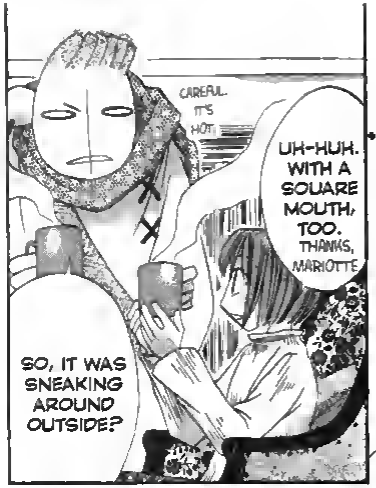
SLAM
AM
BOING
ぽよん
SLAP
MISSED!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
ARE YOU TRYING TO KILL ME?!
WHY DO HUMANS GET SO VIOLENT?!
RUSH
HUFF
HUFF
I ACTUALLY KNOW THIS "MAN-MADE DEMON."
DID IT GET AWAY, SA-HARA?
HUFF

NOT MUCH OF A SECRET.
REALLY?
CAN YOU KEEP IT A SECRET?
IN THIS VERY HOUSE
THAT VERY DEMON IS HERE
HIS NAME'S GERTRUDE.
HE'S ALWAYS ON THE MOVE, LOOKING FOR THE RECIPE THAT MADE HIM.
LOOOOM
BUT, SOME-THING'S NOT RIGHT.
SO?
ARE YOU GOING TO SELL THAT EXPOSE?
SELL? SORT OF.
IT'S FOR A CERTAIN CLIENT.
GASP!
THIS ABAN-DONED HOUSE IS TOO WELL KEPT.
BUT, HE DOESN'T HAVE TO STAY HERE LONG.

IT'S A GOFER OF SORTS.
IT RUNS ERRANDS FOR ITS MASTER.
WHAT IS IT?


IT'S--
YEP. WHONY.

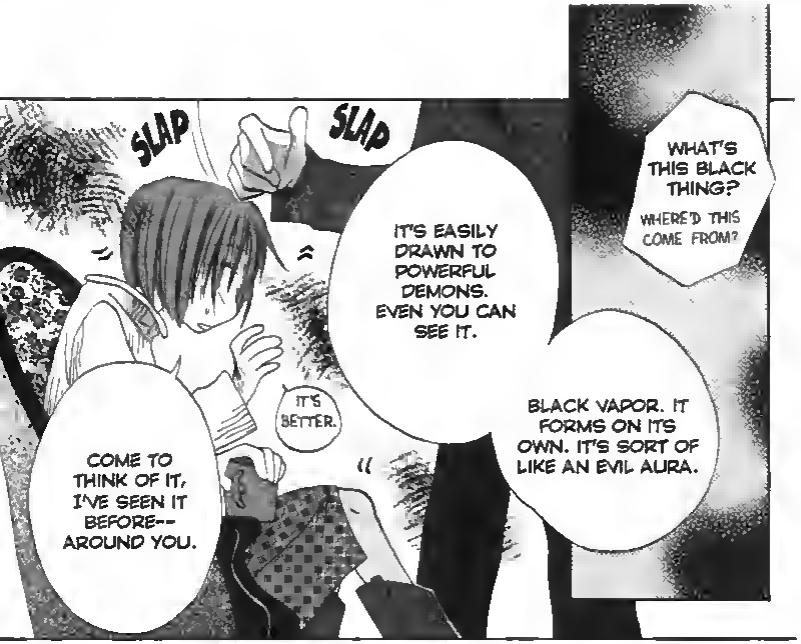
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO, GERTRUDE?
HIS MASTER IS ANOTHER DEMON, AN INFORMANT BY THE NAME OF COLEMAN.
I GUESS HE WAS SENT TO FIND ME.
EITHER WAY, IT'S HIGHLY LIKELY OTHERS WILL COME LOOKING FOR YOU, IF WORD GETS OUT.
IT COULD WELL BE HE WAS ON A DIFFERENT BEAT AND FOUND YOU ACCIDENTALLY.


CAREFUL. IT'S HOT.
UH-HUH. WITH A SQUARE MOUTH, TOO. THANKS, MARIOTTE
SO, IT WAS SNEAKING AROUND OUTSIDE?

NO, HE SAID IT WAS AN EXPOSE.
WAS IT LIKE PUPPEN AND MARIOTTE OF NOT SO LONG AGO?
LIKE, IT WANTED A BODY PART BACK?

HERE! HERE'S A PENCIL AND PAPER.
AS IN A SCOOP?
SLAP
LIKE ORDERING US AROUND, DO YOU?

I MET HIM SEVERAL WEEKS AGO.
I'VE BEEN COMING TO THIS HOUSE SINCE.
A STRANGE GNOME SPORTING A TIE?
REALLY?

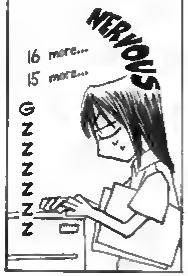

SLAP
SLAP
WHAT'S THIS BLACK THING?
WHERE'D THIS COME FROM?
IT'S EASILY DRAWN TO POWERFUL DEMONS. EVEN YOU CAN SEE IT.
IT'S BETTER.
BLACK VAPOR. IT FORMS ON ITS OWN. IT'S SORT OF LIKE AN EVIL AURA.
COME TO THINK OF IT, I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE-- AROUND YOU.

I'LL CATCH WHONY SOON ENOUGH.
YOU SAW HOW STUPID IT LOOKED.
YOU THOUGHT I WAS DEPRESSED ABOUT IT, SO...
THAT WAS MY AURA.
SAME SORT OF THING, THOUGH. NEGATIVE ENERGY, SO TO SPEAK.
IT'S DRAWN TO DEPRESSED HUMANS, TOO.

I LET SOMETHING THAT DANGEROUS GO?
I'LL CATCH HIM.
GLOOM
IN THE WORST WAY, TOO.
WHISTLE
WHISTLE
WHAT?!
HEY!
HUH? HOW DID YOU...?
yogurt
GIVE 'EM BACK!
UM, SAHARA. DOES YOUR HEAD HURT?
CURSE YOU, PATCH-WORK!

02

My penname is pronounced "Nari," although some Japanese readers might mistakenly pronounce it "Tame" given the Japanese letters I chose. I chose the letters so the name would be like that of a mid-twentieth century writer.
I thought it'd be kind of classy and cool...
It's embarrassing--both to use and be called by it.
It was uncomfortable at first, but I've started getting used to it--finally.
Photocopying is embarrassing. This is something I still can't get used to. I tell myself, "It's for work. It's for work..." while I make photocopies.



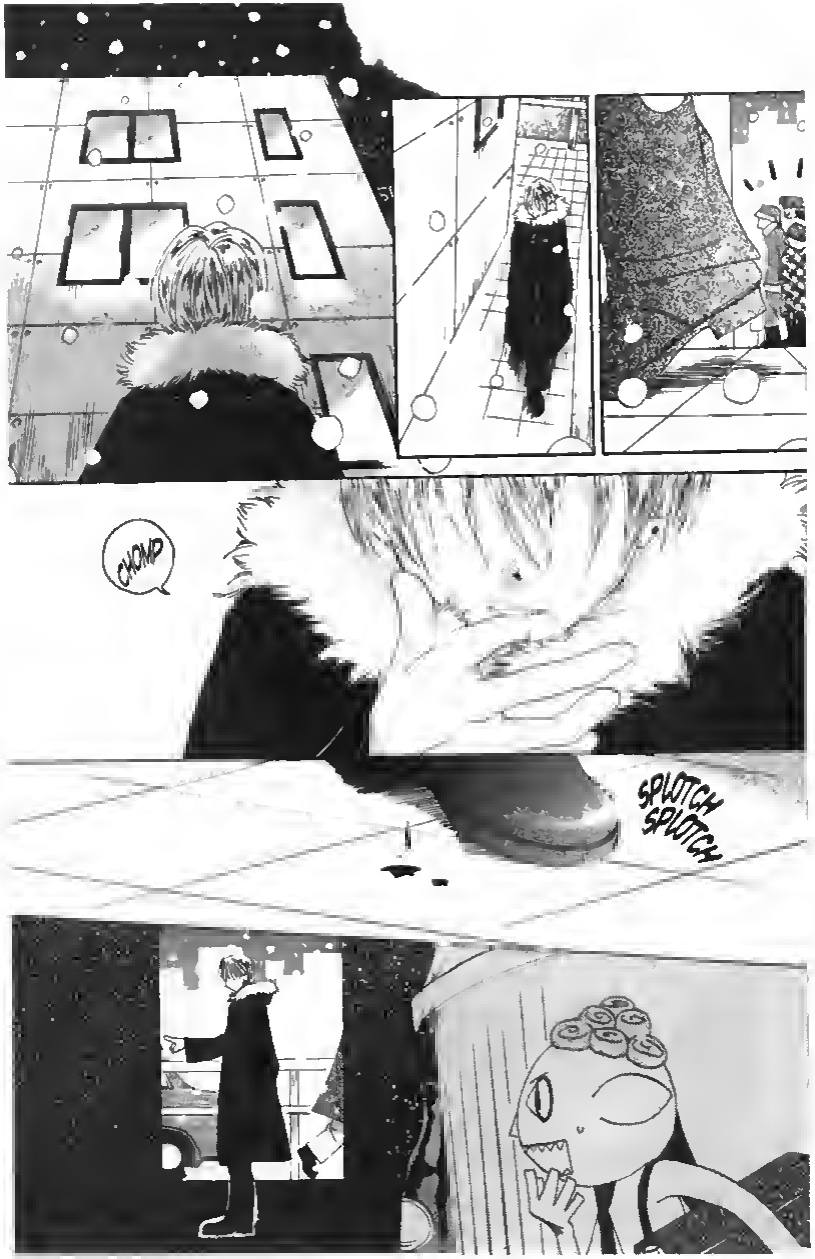
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THEY EVEN ATTACKED US.
THAT'S AN UNDER-STATEMENT. THEY'VE FORGOTTEN THEY'RE EVEN DEMONS.
COMPLETELY EVEN
MARIOTTE'S TOTALLY INTO HOUSE-WORK.
PUPPEN SINGS, EATS, OR DOODLES.

MAYBE, ME BEING DEPRESSED ABOUT LETTING WHONY ESCAPE WASN'T THE CAUSE OF IT.
WH-WHAT?!
YOU'RE ... WEIRD.
HE'S BEING SWEET AS ALWAYS.
EVEN IF HE IS A DEMON.
MAYBE, I DIDN'T WANT TO LOSE ALL THIS
PUPPEN AND MARIOTTE SURE HAVE CHANGED.
IT MAY BE THAT'S WHAT CAUSED THE HEADACHE.

HUH?
SLAP!
...OKAY.
IN OTHER WORDS, TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE.
IT'LL DIE LIKE THAT.
WHO DO YOU CALL? THE POLICE?
THERE'S A WAY.

IT'S STUCK!
A CAT!
MEOW!
MEOW!
IT GOT IN, BUT IT CAN'T GET OUT.
THE SPACE GETS GRADUALLY NARROWER.
IT'S TOO NARROW FOR A PERSON.
I WONDER IF A RESCUE TEAM WILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE WALL.

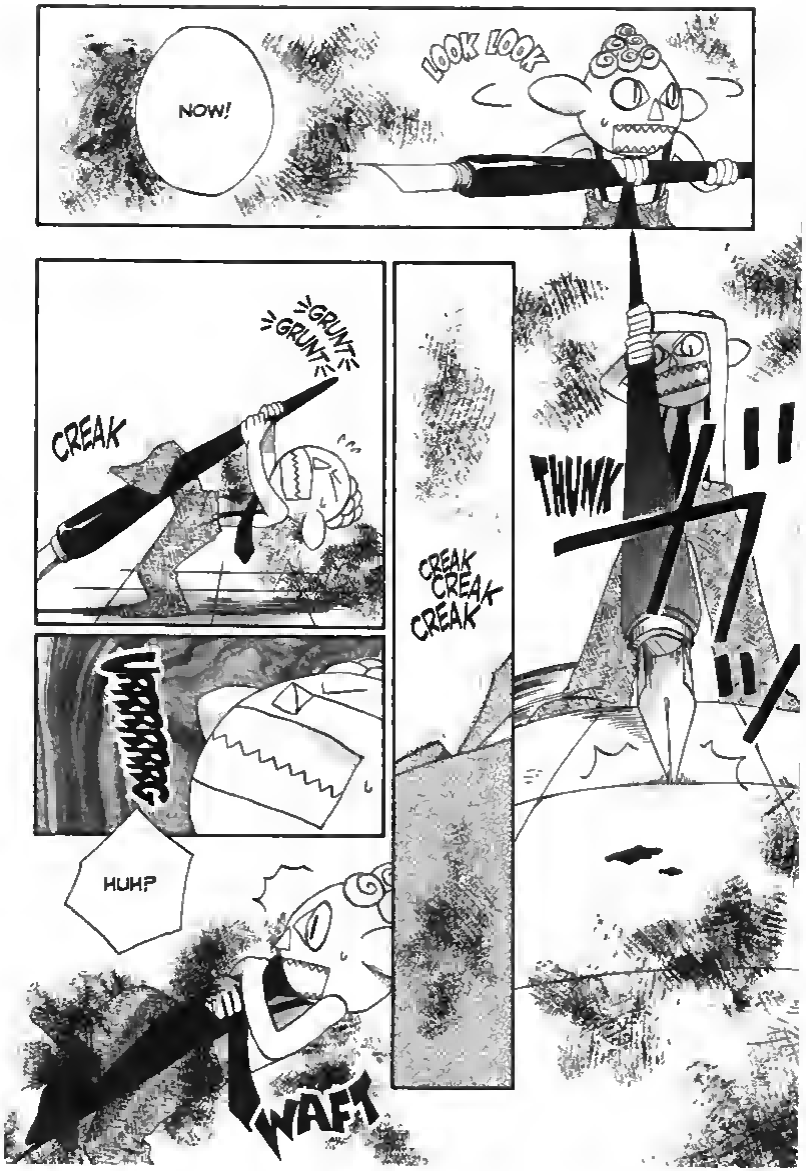
FRAILTY,
AAAAAAAAAAAA
OH!
HEY!
THE FIRE DEPARTMENT'S HERE!
SQUEAK
Frailty thy name is Wall.


CHOMP
SPLOTCH SPLOTCH

HE MUST BE VERY POWERFUL.
BLACK VAPOR IS ALREADY BEING ATTRACTED.
BUT THEN, HIS BLOOD IS MAGICAL, TOO.
THEY'RE GONE.
THUMP THUMP
THIS TIME HE'S LEFT SOME BEHIND.
I'LL TAKE IT BACK.
BLOOD USED FOR SPELLS USUALLY DISAPPEARS.
NOT NOT
HE ESTABLISHES HIS SUPERIORITY OVER OBJECTS WITH THAT SENTENCE BEFORE CONTROLLING THEM.
SKRIBBLE
SKRIBBLE
SKRIBBLE
HE CONTROLS OBJECTS BY ESTABLISHING SUPERIORITY OVER THEM.

MEOW
HUH? REALLY?
WHERE?
MEOW
THY NAME IS WALL.
BEND
HE

THE GIRL, WHONY.
WHO IS SHE?
HE MIXED IT IN WITH NORMAL BLACK AIR, DID HE?
NO WONDER YOU DIDN'T NOTICE.
MASTER!
CLOP
WHONY, THAT'S GERTRUDE'S AURA.
HE USED HIS OWN BLOOD AS BAIT TO CATCH YOU.
THAT'S VERY RISKY.
I DON'T REALLY KNOW.
SAHARA'S HER NAME, THOUGH.
POSSIBLY. POSSIBLY NOT.
ALL THIS FOR FINDING THE RECIPE?
IT'S VERY OBVIOUS HE WANTED TO TAKE CARE OF THIS QUICKLY.


NOW!
LOOK LOOK
GRUNT GRUNT
CREAK
THUNK
CREAK CREAK CREAK
SWISH
HUH?
WAFT

MISS SAHARA IS IT?
THE BLOOD'S MISSING.
WE'LL TAKE HIM HOME FOR NOW.
BUT FIRST, I'D BETTER GET RID OF THE BLOOD.
LICK

YOU FELL FOR IT.
GET THE NAME OF HIS CLIENT, AND THAT'S THAT.
IT WORKED PERFECTLY.
UH-HUH.
COLEMAN RIGHT?
THIS MIGHT BE WORTH INVESTI-GATING.

POOF
THIS IS AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY.
SQUISH
AIEEEEEE!

HE'S STILL HERE IN THIS TOWN. WHY?
I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING BESIDES THE RECIPE.

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO FIND OUT?
SOMETHING VERY STRAIGHT-FORWARD.

FIFT

OH?
GLARE AT ME, WILL YOU?
SHE'LL BE COMING WITH ME.
I NEED TO FIND OUT FOR SURE AFTER ALL.
WHOOSH
SAHARA!

HUH?
RIPPLE
BLACK VAPOR?
RIPPLE
ARE YOU IMPORTANT TO HIM--OR NOT?
CAN YOU BE EXPLOITED AS A WEAKNESS? IF SO, THAT'S VERY GOOD TO KNOW.
HE ABAN-DONED ME!
NOISY!
THERP
HELP ME HELP ME
SO, YOU *REALLY* DON'T KNOW WHERE COLEMAN IS?! YOU'D BETTER NOT BE LYING!
I SWEAR, I SWEAR!

THAT'S GER-TRUDE'S BLOOD.
I'M GOING TO CAST A SPELL IN HIS NAME.
THE BLACK AIR WILL MAKE ITS WAY HERE.
UH-HUH.
WHA?!
THE QUESTION IS, WILL HE COME TO RESCUE YOU?
I NEED TO KNOW.
WHAT ARE YOU TO GERTRUDE?
OF COURSE.
HA HA
IT'S GONNA BE MUCH WORSE THAN A HEADACHE, ISN'T IT?

WAUGH!
I KNOW YOU WON'T LISTEN, BUT I WOULDN'T.
YOU'LL GET HURT.
BAM
HURL
BAM
SEE? I TOLD YOU.
YOU DON'T HAVE ANY POWERS OF ANY SORT.
GERTRUDE'S MAGIC IS NOT THAT WEAK.
THUNK

WHETHER I'M IMPORTANT IS ANOTHER STORY.
SO DO I.
PERSONALLY, I THINK HE'LL SHOW UP.

I SUGGEST YOU WAIT PATIENTLY.
GROSS
ICK ICK ICK

I WONDER...
SSSSSSSSS!
...WHERE'S IT GOING?
IT WENT RIGHT THROUGH ME.
THAT'S ODD.
HEY. WHY'S IT SO DARK IN HERE?
OIL
MAYBE IT'S A BROWNOUT.
WHAT
WHAT
WHAT
ARE YOU TRYING TO BREAK THE SPELL--TILE AND ALL?
WITH TIN!? IT'S EMPTY, TOO

YOU LOOK DAZED.
NOT IN THE LEAST!
YOU PROBABLY FEEL SICK AND WEAK-- AND HAVE A HEADACHE, TOO.
PRETTY DARNED MISERABLE, I'D SAY.
HALF OF IT'S YOUR FAULT!
I HATE YOU!
DRAG
DRAG
IT'S HIS FAULT YOU'RE IN THIS.
LET HIM COME TO YOU.
IT'S NOT AS IF I GOT ACCIDENTALLY INVOLVED.
I CHOSE TO BE HERE.
I'LL SAVE MY OWN SKIN, THANK YOU.
GOOD ENOUGH
I THINK I CAN MAKE IT ACROSS
CLANG
THERE'S ALL THIS FIGHTING AROUND GERTRUDE.
HUFF

WHAM
NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU.
AND, THERE'S NO WAY OF GETTING DOWN.
I'M NOT GOING TO SIT AROUND AND DO NOTHING.
I'D FEEL GUILTY IF I DIDN'T TRY SOMETHING.
WHAM
WHAM
I JUST KNOW HE'LL COME
OW
THE BLACK AIR IS GETTING PRETTY THICK.

TUG
WAUGH!
PLOP
SEE?
I TOLD YOU IT'D WORK.
WOULDN'T YOU SAY, GERTRUDE?
YOU'RE A BIT LATE.

GRUNT
DO YOU KNOW WHAT A GOLEM IS?
THE HEBREW WORD "EMETH"--- OR TRUTH--- IS INSCRIBED ON A CLAY MAN AND GIVEN LIFE.
YOU'RE BRAVE. I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.
BUT, YOU AREN'T GETTING AWAY.
RIP
WE DON'T NEED CLAY HERE.
THE SPELL WILL STILL BE EFFECTIVE--- WITH THIS.
IT'S NOT PERFECT, BUT IT'S MAGICAL ENOUGH.
I HAVE A REASON TO JUMP!
LEAP
I HAVE TO.
SQUEAK

WHOOSH
GET DOWN!
HEY
HE'S GET-TING--
GOOD LUCK.
YOU CAN DEAL WITH THIS GOLEM.
I'LL BE LEAVING.
WHOOOOSH!!
YEP
IT'S QUICKER THAN I EXPECTED, THOUGH.
IT MIGHT BE A BIT DIFFICULT.
JUST TAKING OFF THE PAPER WILL TURN THIS BACK TO VAPOR.
I SAW THAT ON TV.
THEN, THE GOLEM WILL DIE, RIGHT?
TAKING THE "E" OFF "EMETH" WILL LEAVE "METH"--WHICH MEANS DEATH.

A TRADE?
GREAT. I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'D DO WITHOUT HIM.
HE'S VERY USEFUL.
I'D BE MORE THAN HAPPY TO TRADE
I HAD NO INTENTION OF HURTING MISS SAHARA IN THE FIRST PLACE
MASTER
SQUEAK
HERE. WANT THIS BACK?
I'M NOT HAPPY ABOUT YOU CALLING THE SHOTS BUT OH WELL
MASTER.
NOW THEN.

WHAT'S THE BEST WAY?
SO, HOW?
RIP

.....
YOU DON'T GET POINTS FOR DOING SOMETHING DANGEROUS
I'LL DRAW ITS ATTENTION.

I DON'T WANNA MAKE YOU APOLO-GIZE EITHER
WE HAVE SOMETHING FOR ONE ANOTHER. I DON'T WANT THAT TO GET ALL TWISTED IN THE WRONG WAY.
I DON'T WANNA LAY A GUILT TRIP ON YOU.
I DON'T WANNA APOLOGIZE TO YOU FOR BEING A BURDEN.
DASH
THINK I DON'T KNOW THAT?
IT'S JUST THAT I'M LOOKING FOR A WAY.

SO HE DID.
WHAT ABOUT COLEMAN?
HE GOT AWAY.
IT'S NOT A PROBLEM, THOUGH.
I SHOULD BE SAFE HERE.
POOF
MASTER!
YES YES
SORRY, WHONY.
YOU MUST BE ANGRY I LEFT YOU THERE.
BOOHOOHOOOO

POOF
HOW CAN WE STAY TOGETHER?
CRACKLE
WHAT'S THE BEST WAY?

THE DOG USED MY BLOOD!
KICK
I'M NOT GONNA MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE.
HE'LL BE BACK.
REALLY?
CRUNCH
UH-HUH.
IT DOES-N'T HURT THAT MUCH.
OOZE
ICK!
IT LOOKS WORSE THAN IT IS.
FIRST, THOUGH, YOUR HANDS.
YOU KNOW, YOU COULD SAY, "YOU DID GOOD."
A LITTLE COMPLIMENT NEVER HURTS.

HELP ME, MASTER...
I'VE BEEN HAD.
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
MASTER..
SQUIRM
IT WOULD'VE BEEN A SHAME NOT TO USE THE TWO PUPPET MASTERS
BOTH WERE DOING NOTHING ANYWAY
SO, I WENT HOME AND MADE A SWITCH

The RECIPE for GERTRUDE
Chapter 3

HA!
I'M SUPPOSED TO COMPLI-MENT YOU?
SEE?
THERE.
ALL RIGHT. YOU DID GOOD.
I'M STARTING TO REALLY LIKE YOU.
THE FEELING KEEPS GETTING STRONGER.
HOW AM I EVER GOING TO TELL YOU?

I BE-LIEVE YOU.
GOOD. I SWEAR ON MY LIFE.
DO WE HAVE AN AGREE-MENT THEN?
I SWEAR— IT'S NOT A FAKE
THIS IS THE HOLY GRAIL AMONG COLLECTORS.
NOTHING'S DEARER TO ME.
WE SIGN THE CONTRACT FIRST.
NO.
ALL THE PAGES ARE BLANK.
DID YOU THINK YOU COULD FOOL ME, OLD MAN?
I TELL YOU IT ISN'T A FAKE.
I DO KNOW, THOUGH, THE WRITING VANISHED WITHOUT A TRACE SOME YEARS BACK.

SLIDE
IT'S "THE RECIPE FOR GERTRUDE."
IT DESCRIBES HOW TO MAKE A MANMADE DEMON USING PARTS OF OTHER DEMONS.
...WHICH IS WHY I SUMMONED YOU, A DEMON, HERE.
I NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE MY COMPANY SUCCESSFUL AGAIN.
YOU THINK IT'S A FAKE, CURTIS?
IS THAT IT?
NO.
IT WOULD BE POINTLESS, HOWEVER, IF I SOLD MY SOUL.
SO, I OFFER YOU THIS INSTEAD.
AH-AH-AH!
IMPRES-SIVE.
I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE-- A LONG TIME AGO.
IT'S REAL.

KNOCK KNOCK
HI YA
LONG TIME NO SEE, PUPPEN
ガチャ GACHA

MARIOTTE, LOOK! SAHARA'S BACK!
YAHOO!
BACK FROM YOUR SCHOOL TRIP?
WHAT?
YEAH
JUST NOW.
I BROUGHT YOU GUYS A SOUVENIR.

THE SOUVENIR'S IN HERE!
WAUGH!
IT'S SAHARA!
HUG

I'LL TAKE THE RECIPE, THANK YOU.
!!
AND, FOR THE AFFRONT, I'LL TAKE YOUR LIFE, TOO.

I'M SURE A SELF-SERVING COLLECTOR COPIED THEM.
HE WOULD'VE NEEDED MAGIC, THOUGH.
THUD
THUD
THUD

IT WON'T OPEN!
WHAM
WHAM

URK!
CRAM!
OBVIOUSLY, IT WASN'T YOU.
NEVER CHEAT A DEMON.

JOLT = HE'S NEAR DEATH OR...
THE TWO ARE BATTERED. THAT MEANS, HE'S BADLY HURT, TOO.
A DEMON WANTED A BODY PART BACK. THERE WAS A FIGHT.
GASP!
WHY?
WHY THE SHOCK?
THUMP!
THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD THUD
DASH
HEY!
WAIT, SAHARA!
JUST LISTEN FIRST!

SOB
YOU LOOK... BATTERED.
I KNOW I'VE BEEN AWAY FOR A WHILE BUT...
HEY
WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON?
WERE YOU GUYS ATTACKED AGAIN?
THE CURTAINS AREN'T NORMALLY DRAWN SHUT LIKE THAT.
JOLT
WHERE'S GERTRUDE?

WAUGH
SLAP SLAP
OW
WHAT CAN I SAY, THOUGH?
SORRY I SHOULD'VE LISTENED FIRST
SLUMP
ISN'T THERE SOMETHING YOU CAN SAY TO HIM, SAHARA?
WE CAN'T DO ANYTHING RIGHT.
I FEEL SORRY FOR THEM
SQUISH
IT'S OKAY.
THAT'S WHY WE NEEDED YOU BACK.
I FEEL GREAT DURING FULL MOONS.
I HAVE ENERGY TO SPARE.
HEH HEH
DRAWN?
AND, WHY ARE ALL THE CURTAINS DRAWN?
THAT'S UNCOOL
MEANIE
YOU NEVER BEAT THEM UP LIKE THAT.

WAUGH!
NOOOOOO!
KNOCK
NOT THINKING...
HUH?
THUD
THUD
SAHARA, WAIT!
IT'LL BE DANGEROUS IF YOU GET TOO CLOSE.
SHUT UP!
I TOLD YOU BEACH BALL HEADS TO KEEP IT DOWN!
SLAM
ARE THESE FAT HEADS JUST FOR DECORATION?
STOMP STOMP STOMP STOMP
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAFTA TELL YA?!
TAG TAG TAG TAG
GULP

03

I've developed a callous in the palm of my hand because I have a terrible way of holding pencils. My ring finger keeps rubbing the same spot. The nail on my pinkie is even starting to take on a weird shape. That said, it's interesting to watch how my lifestyle manifests itself in my body.

Incidentally, my teeth sometimes hurt when I'm rendering a story. I think I bite down too hard. I wonder what I look like when I'm drawing.

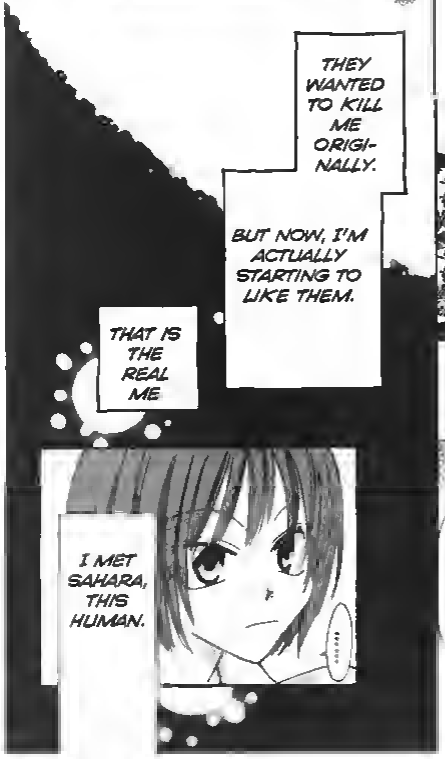
ER... SAHARA?
GASP
YOUR HAIR!
LEAVE ME ALONE TODAY, OKAY?
IT'S NOT A GOOD IDEA TO STAY HERE.
IT'S LIKE WE'RE UNCHAINED.
A LOT OF DEMONS GAIN THEIR FULL POWERS WHEN THE MOON IS FULL.
A WEREWOLF IS ONE.

IT STARTS TO LEACH OUT, CHANGING THE COLOR.
NORMALLY, THE BLACK VAPORS DISSIPATE.
BUT, LOTS OF IT BUILDS UP IN MY BODY DURING FULL MOONS.
YEAH, BUT YOU'RE GOING TO FEEL MISERABLE EVERY TIME.
MAYBE YOU'RE GOING BERSERK BECAUSE YOU'RE TRYING TO HOLD IT DOWN SO MUCH.
LIKE A DIET GONE WRONG
I'M USED TO IT NOW.
I ALWAYS FEEL MISERABLE AND LOOK DIFFERENT AROUND THIS TIME.
IT'LL GO AWAY WHEN THE MOON CHANGES.
WHY DON'T YOU LET IT OUT AND RELAX?
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO SUPPRESS IT ANYWAY

HIS NATURAL TENDENCY TO VIOLENCE COMES THROUGH EASIER BECAUSE HE'S UN-CHAINED.
CHOMP CHOMP
WHY?
AND SO, PUPPEN AND I COULDN'T BE BETTER.
ON THE OTHER HAND, GERTRUDE DOESN'T FEEL SO HOT.
HE TRIES TO PREVENT IT FROM COMING OUT.
SO, HE SHIELDS HIMSELF FROM THE MOONLIGHT.
HE SAID HE DOESN'T LIKE THAT.
AND, HE TAKES IT OUT ON US.
WHY'S YOUR HAIR BLACK, THEN?
SOMETIMES, HE GOES BERSERK-- LIKE JUST NOW.
IT ISN'T ALWAYS ENOUGH.

SINCE THEN, I'VE STARTED CHANGING.
MY BODY PARTS AREN'T REALLY MINE.
THEY'RE NOT MY REAL HANDS OR FEET. NOT EVEN A SINGLE STRAND OF HAIR IS.
THEY'RE ALL CONNECTED TO ONE THING, THOUGH.
MY HEART AND SOUL.
THEY'RE THE ONLY THINGS I CAN SAY ARE MINE.

THE ONLY THINGS.



I'M ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT THINGS.
THESE ARE THINGS I THINK ABOUT A LOT.
I INTEND TO BE TRUE TO MYSELF-- ALWAYS.
I HATE IT WHEN I LOSE CONTROL AND LOSE SIGHT OF THEM.

MY LEFT EYE LOOKS GOOD ON YOU.
HOW DID YOU FIND ME?
IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF TIME.
AN EYE THIS TIME?
WHY, YOU SAY?
BECAUSE I STARTED THE RUMOR THE RECIPE WAS IN THIS TOWN.
YOU DID?!
I WANT MY EYE BACK, PLEASE.
IT WAS A TRAP.
JUST FOR YOU.

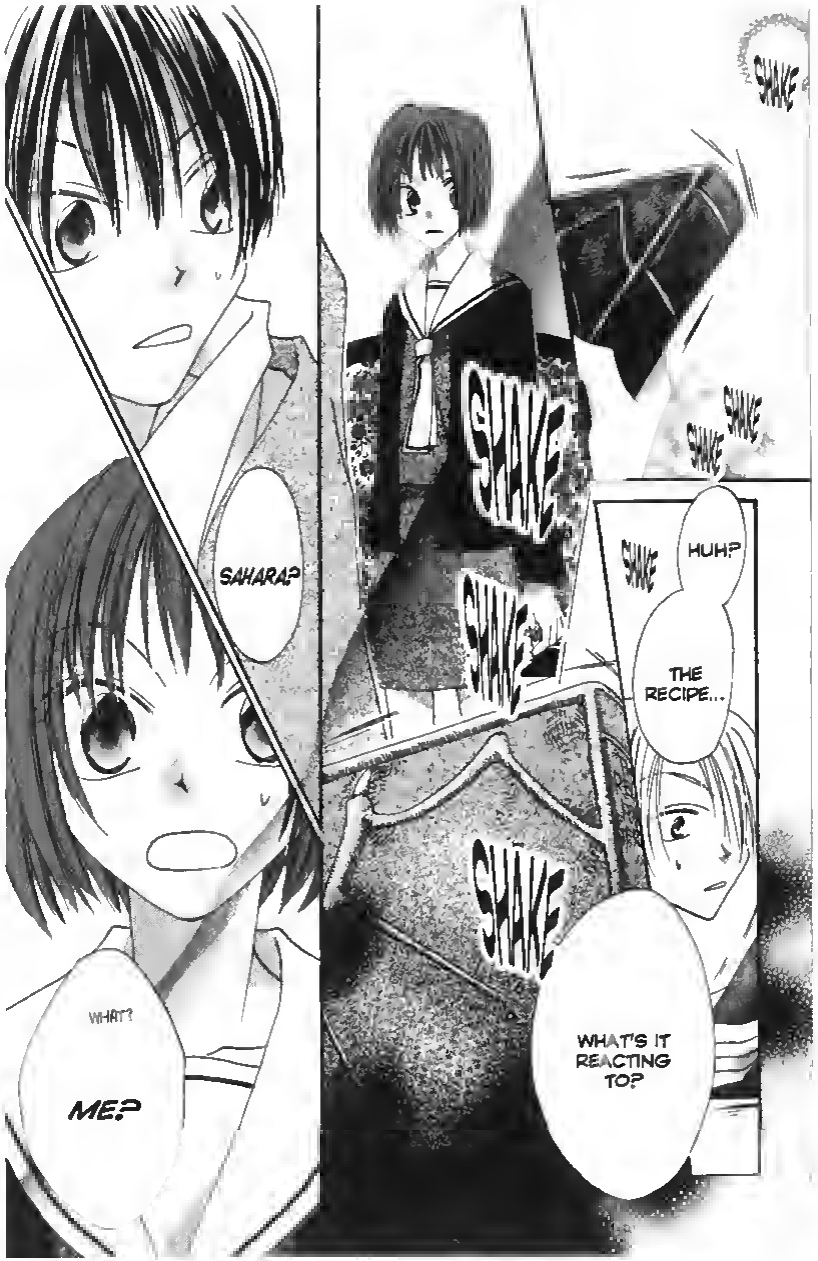
WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
HE LEADS A PRETTY INSULAR LIFE.
WOULDN'T YOU SAY, MISS?
I TELL PEOPLE TO CALL ME CURTIS.
WHO ARE YOU?
PLONK
TUG

I ONLY WANTED MY EYE BACK AT FIRST.
BUT, YOU'VE PIQUED MY CURIOSITY.
YOU LIVE IN A PRISON OF YOUR OWN MAKING.
HUH?
YOU CAN HAVE IT-- ON ONE CONDITION.
COME WITH ME.
MY OWN PRISON? YEAH, RIGHT.
YOU'RE SAYING YOU DON'T?
I WOULD IMAGINE THE GIRL AGREES WITH ME.
YOU STARTED SAYING SOMETHING.
NO
I WAS JUST--

THAT IS SO TYPICALLY DEVILISH
NO. IT DOES EXIST.
I ENJOY WATCHING PEOPLE DESTROY THEMSELVES.
I JUST LIKE FOOLING PEOPLE INTO IMPOSSIBLE CONTRACTS.
THE RECIPE DOESN'T EXIST?
YOU MADE IT UP?
PULL
HE HAD THE RECIPE.
MY MOST RECENT VICTIM WAS AN OLD MAN.
HE WAS A PASSIONATE COLLECTOR OF ALL THINGS OCCULT.
IT MIGHT COME N HANDY
STILL, DO YOU WANT THIS?
ADMITTEDLY, THE CONTENTS HAD BEEN MAGICALLY LIFTED.

I GET IT.
YOU STOLE THE WRITING.
I'M IMPRESSED
I DID NOT!
STOP DENYING IT
THE CONTENTS WERE PERHAPS ODD.
BUT, IT WAS STILL A PLAIN OLD BOOK-- UNTIL A SPELL WAS CAST UPON IT.
SEE HOW IT'S REACTING TO YOU?

MY FAMILY'S REALLY NORMAL
DAD
MOM
OLDER BROTHER
ME
SO ARE MY RELATIVES.
WE DON'T HAVE A SECRET VAULT OR ANYTHING. AND, I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT BOOK.
IT COULD BE YOU KNOW THE PERSON WHO CAST THE SPELL.
IT MIGHT BE A RELATIVE
OR, YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE RECIPE.
NO, I'M NOT LYING.
LYING!
YOU'VE BEEN LYING!


SAHARA?
WHAT?
ME?
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
SHAKE
HUH?
THE RECIPE...
WHAT'S IT REACTING TO?

I JUST LOST ANY LEVERAGE I MIGHT HAVE HAD.
WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT YOU HAD THAT.
GLOP
FORGET IT.
I'M NOT GOING, NO MATTER WHAT.
EVERY DAY WILL BE A BLAST.
COME WITH ME.
I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO LIVE IT UP.
DON'T TELL ME HOW TO LIVE MY LIFE.
THAT'S TOO BAD.

HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?
WE ALL HAVE SECRETS WE WANT KEPT. EVEN YOU.
ADD THIS.
GASP
ADD THIS
ADD THIS.
IT MAY BE YOU JUST DON'T KNOW.
THE BOOK MAKES NO SENSE UNLESS YOU KNEW WHAT IT WAS FOR.

WHAT'S WITH HIS STRENGTH?
I'M NOT EVEN IN THE SAME LEAGUE!
THIS IS ALWAYS FUN.
GRRRRR
YOU'RE VERY WEAK.
YOU SHOULD BASK IN THE MOON-LIGHT.
THAT'S NOTHING!
I'M NOT LOSING IT TO YOU, THOUGH!
OTHERWISE, YOU'RE GOING TO LOSE YOUR EYE.

THUD
THUD
WHOA?!
THAT'S FAST
IT'S LIKE WHEN HE FIRST CAME IN.
I DIDN'T EVEN SEE HIM MOVE.
COME ON!
YOU CAN BEAT HIM!

COME ON.
IS GIVING IN TO IT THAT BAD?
I WAS ASKED TO CONVINCE HIM
WHY'D THEY HAVE TO HELP ME?
HE'S TOO STRONG.
HE'LL TAKE YOUR EYE.
……

I'M ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT THINGS. THESE ARE THINGS I THINK ABOUT A LOT. I HATE IT WHEN I LOSE CONTROL AND LOSE SIGHT OF THEM.
YOU DON'T ALWAYS HAVE TO BE PERFECT, YOU KNOW.
IT'S OKAY TO LOOSEN UP SOMETIMES.

SLASH
GERTRUDE!
HE ONLY SCRATCHED MY FACE
YOU'RE BLEEDING!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT
I STILL HAVE MY EYE.
DRIP
YOU OWE US.
HEY, PATCHWORK!
STOP BEING IDEALISTIC AND USE YOUR REAL POWERS!
YOU IDIOT!

I CAN AFFORD AN EYE.
SMASH
AIEEEEEEE!
PIERCE
WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WITH THAT?
I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING NOW.
RISE
THERE'S NO WAY OUT THIS TIME.
PUPPEN!
I'D BETTER DO IT BEFORE THEY GET KILLED.

NOOOO
I NEVER WANT TO LET GO.
NOT OF THE THINGS I BELIEVE ARE ME.
IN THE END, WHERE'S THE REAL ME?
IT'S JUST... I DUNNO.
NOT THAT I'M GOING TO GIVE THEM BACK
NONE OF MY BODY PARTS ARE MINE.
IT ONLY EXISTS IN MY CONSCIOUSNESS.
IT'S OVER IF I LOSE THOSE
MY HEART AND SOUL ARE THE ONLY THINGS THAT ARE TRULY MINE.

GERTRUDE IS INSIDE ME, TOO, YOU KNOW.
YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE TO GIVE UP ANYTHING.
SUPPOSE YOU LOSE CONTROL.
I'LL CALL HIM AND BRING HIM BACK FOR YOU.
I'M NOT SURE IF...
TUG

BUT, I DON'T AGREE.
KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO DO IF YOU TAKE ANOTHER STEP?
I'LL TAKE MY OWN EYE OUT FIRST.
WH-WHAT?!
DON'T GET HURT.
PHEW
THAT'S BLACKMAIL!
YOUR EYE HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS!
PUT THAT DOWN! IT'S DANGEROUS!
EYES DON'T GROW BACK!

THEN I WILL GIVE YOU MY HEART AND SOUL.
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME.
THEY'RE THE ONLY THINGS I'M POSITIVE ARE MINE.
ROGER!
MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!
DRAW THE CURTAIN!
WHOOSH!

MY HEART AND SOUL.
HE WON'T GET LOST THAT EASILY.
I WON'T LET IT HAPPEN
MAKE SURE YOU BRING HIM BACK.
I PROMISE.

TAP
TAP
HEH
WRENCH!
SCRTSH
!!

FLOP
HEY!
PLAYING DEAD

HA HA
VERY IMPRESSIVE.
HE'S SINKING INTO THE WALL.
100G
I THINK I LIKE YOU.
I'LL DROP BY AGAIN.
HE'S GOING TO SEND HIM SOMEWHERE.
11GGG
ZIGGG
SQUISH
SQUISH
NO NO IT WAS REALLY FUN. ♡
ARE YOU STUPID?!
GO HOME!
DON'T EVER COME BACK!

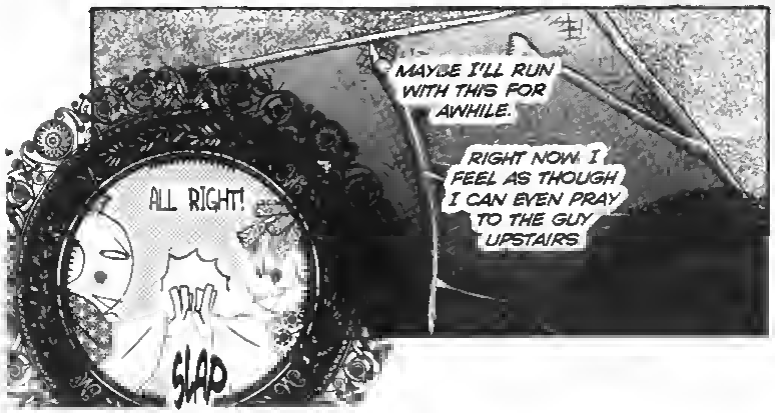
GOOD-BYE.
PLOP
HEY
PULL
I'LL HAVE THAT.
FRAILTY,
THY NAME IS...
DON'T EVER COME BACK.
WALL.

I'M PERFECTLY ALL RIGHT
EVEN IN THE MOON-LIGHT.
NAH
I DON'T NEED IT.
I THINK I'M OKAY WITHOUT IT.
I DISCOVERED SOMETHING NEW.
SURE
HUH?
AS A MATTER A FACT, I KEEP DISCOVERING NEW THINGS WITH YOU.
PUT YOUR HAND OUT.

GULP
HUFF
GASP
LLOOP
GERTRUDE?
GLOP
HERE'S YOUR BLANKET.
YOU DID IT.

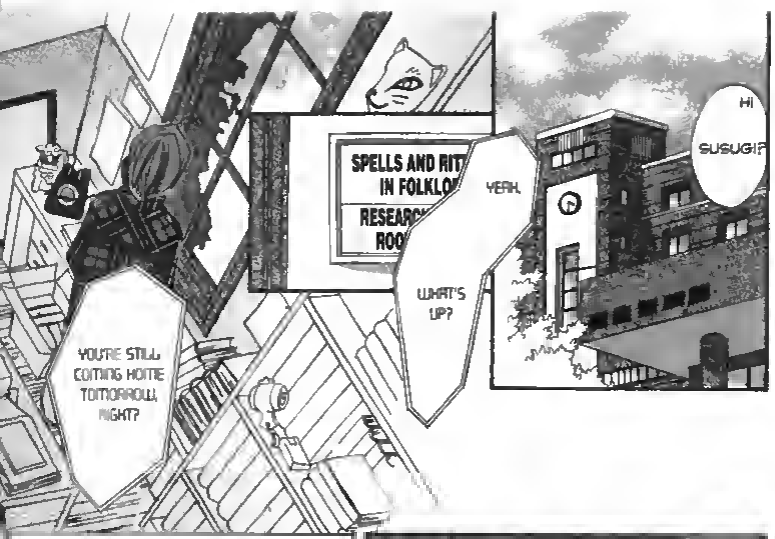
The RECIPE for GERTRUDE
Chapter 4

SAHARA...
I FEEL GOOD.
SO DO I.
SLAP
YOUR WORDS HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE THE WORLD.


MAYBE I'LL RUN WITH THIS FOR AWHILE.
RIGHT NOW I FEEL AS THOUGH I CAN EVEN PRAY TO THE GUY UPSTAIRS
ALL RIGHT!
SLAP

TO TOP IT OFF, SAHARA'S YOUR ONLY LEAD.
DEMONS (SORT OF) ⬅ PUPPEN MARIOTTE ⬆
ME, SUSUGI SAHARA, THE HUMAN DRAWN INTO THIS
SHE DOESN'T KNOW ANY-THING. SO SHE SAYS.
UH-HUH
IT SHOULDN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH ME
WHAT'S THE POINT IN COLLECTING JUST WORDS?
NOT A SINGLE LETTER IS LEFT.
EVERYTHING'S BEEN MAGICALLY LIFTED AND COPIED ELSEWHERE.
GERTRUDE, THE "MANMADE" DEMON
TAP
ABSOLUTELY...
SO, WHY? WHY DOES IT ALWAYS RESPOND TO ONLY ME LIKE THAT?
CLATTER CLATTER CLATTER
I DUNNO.
...NO PROGRESS...

IT ALL BEGAN 100 YEARS AGO
SOME SCIENTIST STITCHED PARTS OF DIFFERENT DEMONS TOGETHER AND CREATED A NEW ONE.
THE METHOD IS DESCRIBED IN "THE RECIPE FOR GERTRUDE."
NOW, THIS ELUSIVE BOOK PASSED THROUGH MANY HANDS.
NONE-THELESS, THE BOOK FINALLY ENDED UP IN THE HANDS OF ITS VERY SUBJECT. THERE'S ONLY ONE PROBLEM.
ALL OF THE PAGES ARE BLANK.


SPELLS AND RIT
IN FOLKLO
RESEARC
ROO
HI SUSUGI?
YEAH.
WHAT'S UP?
YOU'RE STILL COMING HOME TOMORROW, RIGHT?

GULP
REAL-LY?
MOM SAYS YOU'RE NEVER HOME NOWADAYS.
SURE. WHERE DO YOU WANT TO MEET?

WELL, YEAH.
THE TRAIN GETS THERE JUST AFTER TWELVE.
WE HAVEN'T EATEN OUT IN A LONG TIME. HOW'S LUNCH SOUND?

I HOPE SHE'S NOT HANGING OUT WITH THE WRONG CROWD.
HMMMM
CLICK
..SOUNDS GOOD
SEE YOU TOMORROW THEN.

IT INDICATES YOU'RE RELATED TO THE PERSON WHO CAST THE SPELL.
OR, YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE CONTENTS.

THANKS.
I'VE LOOKED ALL OVER MY HOUSE. I'VE EVEN ASKED MY RELATIVES.
THERE'S NOTHING THAT EVEN COMES CLOSE.

EXCUSE ME.
IT'S MY OLDER BROTH-ER.
R R R
OH
SORRY, MY PHONE.
HUH?
R R R R R R R R R

REALLY?
HE RECOGNIZES YOU NOW.
GREAT!
SNIFF
POOF
GETTING AROUND WITH YOU IS SO MUCH QUICKER.
OH
I'M HOME, SHIPPEI. ♡
NAMED AFTER A FOLKTALE BY BROTHER
STARE
HE SAYS HE LIKES YOU. ♡
.....
CREAK
HERE, SHIPPEI
YOU ARE A DEMON.
NO BODY TEMPERATURE. PURPLE BLOOD.
PROBABLY
MOST DOGS BARK AT ME
HE DOESN'T KNOW ANY BETTER

KYUSAKU SAHARA. TWENTY-SIX YEARS OLD.
SELDOM LEAVES HIS UNIVERSITY.
BIP
ACTUAL BROTHER NINE YEARS OLDER.
UNIVERSITY T.A. TEACHING FOLKLORE.
VERY RESERVED. NEVER STANDS OUT.
DULL, BUT SINCERE
SOMEWHAT OVERLY PROTECTIVE OF SUSUGI
IF YOU ASK ME, MY BROTHER WOULD BE THE LAST PERSON TO HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE RECIPE.
SURE. WHY NOT?
BUT, LET'S NOT PLAY FAVORITES.
CHECK HIM OUT.
WANNA COME TO THE STATION WITH ME?
THIS IS GREAT.

DUUU

WHEN SHE'S WITH FAMILY, SHE REALLY LOOK'S --

4
THAT WAS TOO CLOSE!
STICK

NOTH-ING.
WHA?
WHAT IS IT?
GULP
15
I MISTOOK SOME-ONE.

YOU IDIOT
WHAT FOR?
YOU CAN DO THAT ANYTIME.
HANG OUT WITH YOUR BRO' FOR A CHANGE.
NOW, THAT IS SOMETHING I CAN DO ANYTIME.

YOU DIRTBAGS
WANT ME TO LEAVE YOU HERE?
SHE'S TOTALLY THINKING OF YOU.
HEE HEE
DON'T CRY 'CAUSE YOU'RE TOUCHED
YOU'RE ALREADY PACKAGED NICELY.
HEE HEE
IDIOTS.

ZAAAAAAA
WE USED TO COME HERE A LOT.
THE PLACE IS REALLY RUN DOWN
BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE EATEN HERE.
CAN'T REMEMBER WHEN.
TAKE YOUR TIME!
SHM
MY ORDER?
JUST WATER.
THE VERY GUY WHO MADE ME.

THAT STARE.
HIS DEMEANOR.
NAH. CAN'T BE.
!
THE MADMAN.
CLAUDE.
THE GUY'S LONG DEAD.
I EVEN SAW HIM DIE.
↑3·4

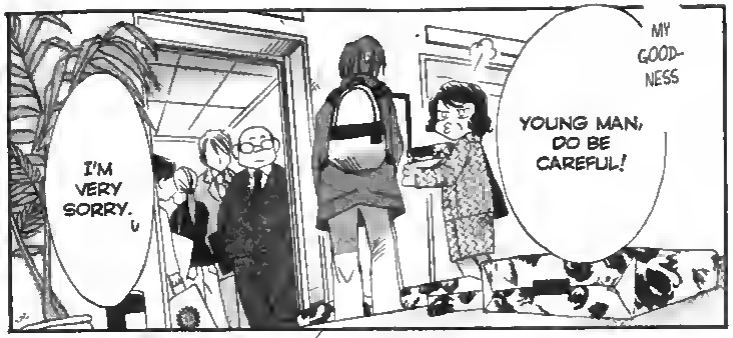
04

I've only been to the editorial department twice, but I'm amazed at how few people there are. It was completely different to what I'd expected, considering the number of artists. I mean, the magazine is big with nationwide coverage. Amazing.
There are lots of things I don't know. I'd like to see the editing process, printing process, and that sort of stuff at least once.
Is that out of the question?

Incidentally, I work from my parents' home, at my old desk. Right now, I do everything myself.

THE THIRD ONE...
/S DIFFI-CULT.
...HAS BEEN THROUGH A LOT.
HE SOMETIMES PRETENDS HE'S HAPPY WHEN HE'S NOT.
HE'S REALLY COOL, THOUGH. HE ALWAYS HOLDS HIS HEAD UP.
I'LL INTRO-DUCE HIM TO YOU-- ONE DAY.

HOLD ON.
EXCUSE ME?
I'M NOT HOME A LOT, BUT IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK.
AHEM
COULD YOU, LIKE, INTRODUCE ME TO WHOM YOU'RE GOING OUT WITH?
ERRR
SUSUGI?
YOU TEND TO BE REALLY NOSY AT TIMES, YOU KNOW?
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN OVERLY PROTECTIVE.
YOU EVEN GAVE ME THIS CELL PHONE.
ME, A GLUTTON?
THERE ARE THREE IN ALL.
TWO OF THEM ARE INSEPAR-ABLE.
ONE'S REALLY ATTENTIVE AND INTO DETAIL.
THE OTHER'S A HAPPY-GO-LUCKY GLUTTON.
OH. IS THAT ALL?
I JUST THOUGHT...
WHAT ARE THEY LIKE?
BUT ANYWAY, I'M JUST HANGING OUT WITH SOME NEW FRIENDS.


I'M VERY SORRY.
MY GOOD-NESS
YOUNG MAN, DO BE CAREFUL!

GEE
GO ON AHEAD.
WAIT FOR ME DOWN-STAIRS.
HERE
PICK IT UP.
YOU CAN CARRY IT FOR ME, TOO!
KYU-SAKU?

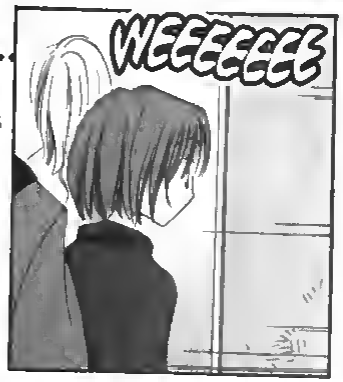
OKAY.
WEEEE
EEEE

HE'S RIGHT.
THIS PLACE HAS DEFINITELY SEEN ITS BETTER DAYS.

WEE
EE
EE
EE

GASP
SOME-THING'S DEFI-NITELY GOING ON!
.....
WANNA GO NOW?
DONG

OH, MY!
OOPS
BUMP


WEEEEEEE

I THINK IT'S FALLING!
THAT'S THE ONE FROM THE TOP FLOOR.
IT'S COMING DOWN WAY TOO FAST!
SUSUGI!
DUMMY
FLASH
FLASH
FLASH
FLASH
HUH?
YOU'RE RIGHT.

GGG
WAUGH
WHAT?
GRUMBLE
IT BROKE?
SNAP
SPLASH
HEY.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE ELEVATOR?
SPLASH
WASSH

SPLASH
GLUB
GLUB
GLUB
GLUB
GLUB
GLUB
IT'S COLD.
HUH? WATER?!
THE FOUNTAIN WATER!

FOUNTAIN WATER?
THAT'S IT!
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
SPLASH
THIS IS THE GROUND FLOOR!
IT'S GAME OVER IF IT HITS.
AND, SUSUGI'S NOT THE ONLY ONE ON THERE.
I HOPE I'M IN TIME!
FRAILTY,
THY NAME IS WATER.

HAND
GUB
GUB
GUB
GUB
GUB
GUB
GUB
GUB
1
PONG

ナ!!
GRUNK
ヤバ
SPLOOOOSH
DO YOUR THING!
GLUB
GLUB
GLUB
GLUB
GLUB

WOW!
AMAZING!
IT'S A MIRACLE!
HUBBUB
THE ELEVATOR FELL!
CALL FOR AMBULANCES!
HUBBUB
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
IS ANYONE HURT?
HUBBUB
DASH
SUSUGI!
CALL THE MANAGER! ASK FOR DIRECTIONS!
ARE ANY OF YOU HURT?

GA-DOOOOM!
GULP
WEE EE EE EE EEE

ONE THING, THOUGH.
SOMETHING VERY PECULIAR SHOWED UP.
FWP
COME IN
OH...
HER OLDER BROTHER? WELL, HAVE A SEAT.
IT'S NOT BROKEN.
WE X-RAYED HER ARM BECAUSE SHE SAID SHE BANGED IT.

OVER HERE!
KYUSAKU?
GOOD THING YOU MISSED IT.
KEEP PEOPLE OUT!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
IS ANYTHING BROKEN?
LIKE I SAID, THE FOUNTAIN WATER...
FREAKING ME OUT.
ME, TOO.
IT WENT UP TO THE CEILING.
A BOY OPENED THE DOORS.
THE WATER RUSHED IN
I DIDN'T SEE ANY STAIRS.
THE ELEVATOR REALLY DID FALL.
A FALL FROM THAT HEIGHT? THERE'S NO WAY THEY SHOULD'VE BEEN OKAY.
AND, WHAT'S WITH ALL THIS WATER?
WHAT ON EARTH HAPPENED?
IT WAS HIM.
HEY

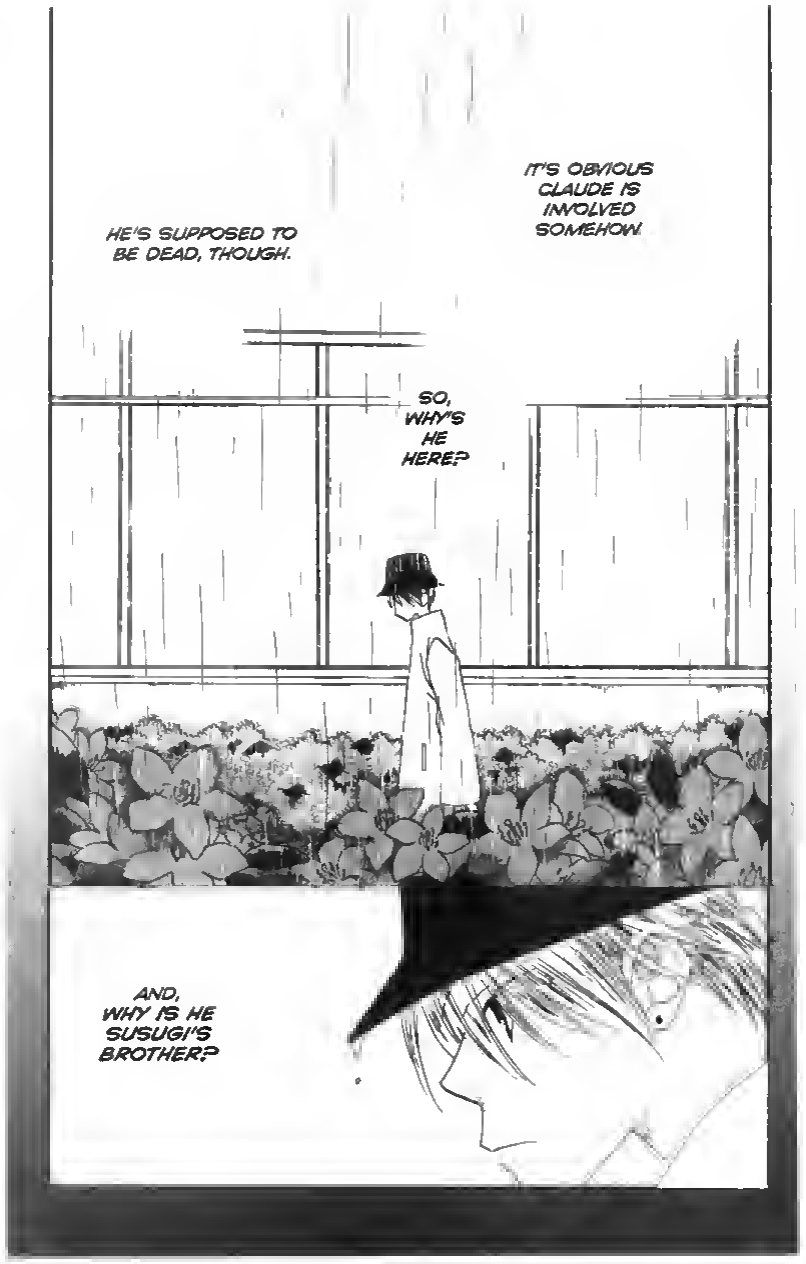
I'D BETTER HOLD ON TO THIS.
THIS IS *THE* RECIPE FOR GERTRUDE
I DON'T THINK I FOLLOW YOU.
IT'D BE TERRIBLE IF THE WRONG PEOPLE SAW THIS.
IT'S GOOD YOU DON'T.
FORGET THAT YOU EVEN SAW IT.
LOOK INTO MY EYES.
DEEP INTO MY EYES.
YES
LISTEN VERY CAREFULLY TO ME.

TAKE A LOOK.
TAP
IT APPEARS AS THOUGH *THERE'S WRITING ON THE BONES*
I CAN'T SAY FOR SURE UNTIL WE RUN SOME MORE TESTS THOUGH.
EXCUSE ME?
I NEED TO KNOW.
HAS ANYONE ELSE SEEN THIS X-RAY?
CLANK!
FLAP..
HEY!
PUT THAT DOWN!
JUST THE LAB TECH AND THE NURSE. WHY?
BY GOLLY
AS A DOCTOR, I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.
I'D IMAGINE SO.
IT CAN'T BE MEDICALLY EXPLAINED.

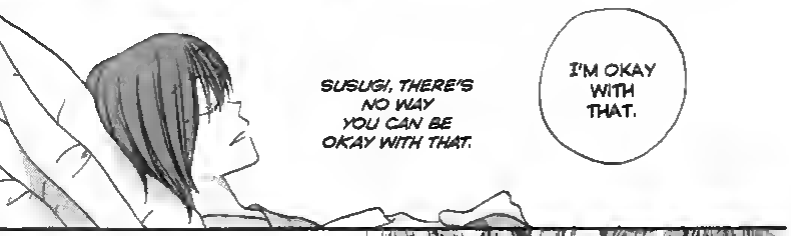
I'M POSITIVE THAT WAS GERTRUDE.
HE IS MY MAS-TER-PIECE
THERE'S NO WAY I'D MISTAKE HIM.
THE WAY HE FREAK'ED OUT...
SPLISH
HE HAD TO HAVE RECOGNIZED ME.
SPLISH
IT HAS TO BE.
SPLISH

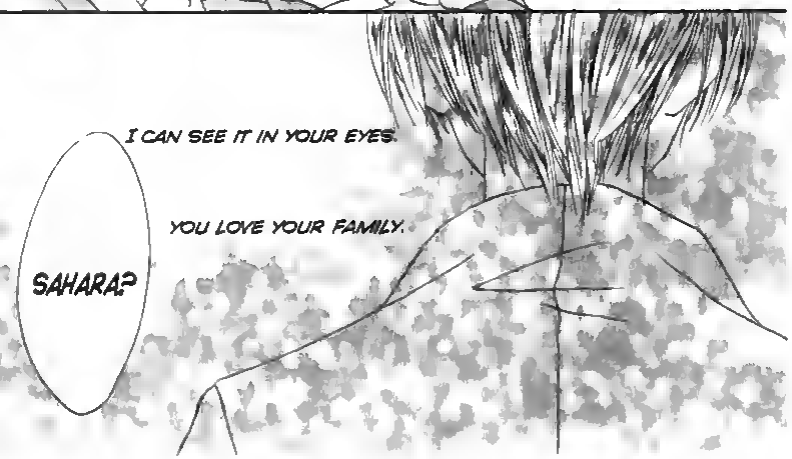
3
2
1
SNAP
HUH?
WHERE WAS I?
THOCK
UM... YEAH. SO, NOTHING'S BROKEN.
SHE CAN GO HOME.
OKAY?
THANK YOU.
A LAB TECH AND NURSE?
EASY ENOUGH. I'LL HYPNOTIZE THEM LIKE ALWAYS.
STILL, I NEED TO BE CAREFUL.

SAHARA
SUSUKI
ZAAAAAAA.


HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD, THOUGH.
IT'S OBVIOUS CLAUDE IS INVOLVED SOMEHOW.
SO, WHY'S HE HERE?
AND, WHY IS HE SUSUGI'S BROTHER?

I'LL FIGHT ANYONE OVER IT-- INCLUDING YOUR BROTHER.
I DON'T CARE IF HE'S YOUR BROTHER.
HE CAN'T HAVE THE RECIPE.
OH.


SUSUGI, THERE'S NO WAY YOU CAN BE OKAY WITH THAT.
I'M OKAY WITH THAT.


I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES.
YOU LOVE YOUR FAMILY.
SAHARA?

WAUGH!
SNAP
WHAT?
FREAKED ME OUT
IF YOU'RE AWAKE, SAY SO, YOU IDIOT!
CLANG
I'M JUST WAITING FOR THE TEST RESULTS NOW.
THE DEPARTMENT STORE OVER-REACTED.
THEY FORCIBLY CHECKED US IN HERE.

IT'S YOUR BROTHER.
SOMETHING'S NOT QUITE RIGHT.
THANKS. YOU SAVED MY LIFE.
YEAH. I GUESS
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU LOOK WORRIED.

I KNOW IT'S GOING TO CAUSE PROBLEMS FOR YOU, BUT...

CLOP
JUST GREAT.
THE WORST POSSIBLE SCENARIO.
BUT, I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO COME BETWEEN US.

I WISH IT DIDN'T GET ALL MIXED UP LIKE THIS.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
BRRR THAT WAS COLD.
I SHOULDN'T BE ASKING YOU TO CHOOSE.
I WANT TO SEE YOU, TOO.
OKAY GER-TRUDE?

MY GRANDFATHER
MORI-YAMA?
SORRY, BUT OKAY?
SURE.
HEY, SHIROU!
THAT WAS IKEGAMI!
ALL RIGHT! A LOVE LETTER?
WHAT?!
YOU HAVE IT WRONG, GUYS.
THIS ISN'T FOR ME.
URG
I'M CHOKED.
I'M HAPPY FOR YOU.
LOVE COMES CALLING-- EVEN TO NERDS LIKE YOU.

100 YEARS OF EFFORT
I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET THAT GO TO WASTE
SNAP
DOUBLY SO IF SUSUGI LIKES GERTRUDE
I'D BETTER DEAL WITH THIS FIRMLY
IT'S NOT EASY FINDING A HIDING SPOT LIKE THAT.
HHNNNN
HHNNNN
THE RECIPE FOR GERTRUDE--END

HEY!
I'd like to swap
WE ALL HAVE A RIVAL OR TWO.
WE ALL DO.
TICK

ME
WIFE
SON-IN-LAW
DAUGHTER
GRANDSON
MY GRANDFATHER
GRANDFATHER
GRANDMOTHER
FATHER
MOTHER
ME!

BEEP
DAN-DAN-DAN!
HE'S MINE.
I WIN. YOU LOSE.
THAT BITES!
STILL NOT FAST ENOUGH, SHIROU.
I'M SICK OF THEM!
WHY DO YOU HAVE TO KEEP WATCHING THESE SHOWS FOR OLD TIMERS?
I WANNA WATCH SOMETHING DIFFERENT FOR A CHANGE.

WHAT'S THAT?
I'M LOSING MY HEARING OF LATE.
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?
GRANDPA?!
MEET MORI-YAMA REN.
HE'S 78.
HE'S MY GRAND-FATHER.
YOU'RE NOT THAT OLD.
YOU LYING SLIMEBALL!
I AM 78.
WHAT'S THAT, SONNY?
YOU ALWAYS PLAY GERIATRIC AT TIMES LIKE THIS!
WHAT'S WITH THE LIGHTNING FAST REFLEXES THEN?

A LETTER?
WHAT? IS TODAY RESPECT-THE-ELDERLY DAY?
IT'S FROM A GIRL.
IT'S FOR YOU.
IT GETS WORSE.
HE REVELS IN IT. AND, HE PASSES ALL HIS PROBLEMS ONTO HIS GRANDSON--ME.
HERE, GRAMPS.
NO!
THEN WHAT?
BESIDES, YOU DON'T DESERVE RESPECT. NOT THE WAY YOU CARRY ON.

PRETTY OBVIOUS, HUH?
MY GRAND-FATHER ISN'T QUITE NORMAL.
HE'S GOING TO LIVE SEVERAL TIMES LONGER THAN REGULAR PEOPLE.
BECAUSE OF THAT, HIS BODY DEVELOPS VERY SLOWLY.
HE MAY BE 78, BUT HE'S A TEENAGER PHYSICALLY.
VERY, VERY FEW PEOPLE ARE LIKE HIM.
BORN IN 1921.
LIFE LINE

REALLY?
COOL!
HERE.
IT'S FROM MY BRO'.
THEY'RE NOT MEANT FOR EACH OTHER.
YOU CAN BE INTO OLDER MEN, BUT THERE IS A LIMIT.
GRIN
HUH?
GREAT!
"GREAT?!"
WAIT A SEC..
THANK YOU.
SHE'S GONNA BE CRUSHED.
I GUESS IT CAN'T BE HELPED.

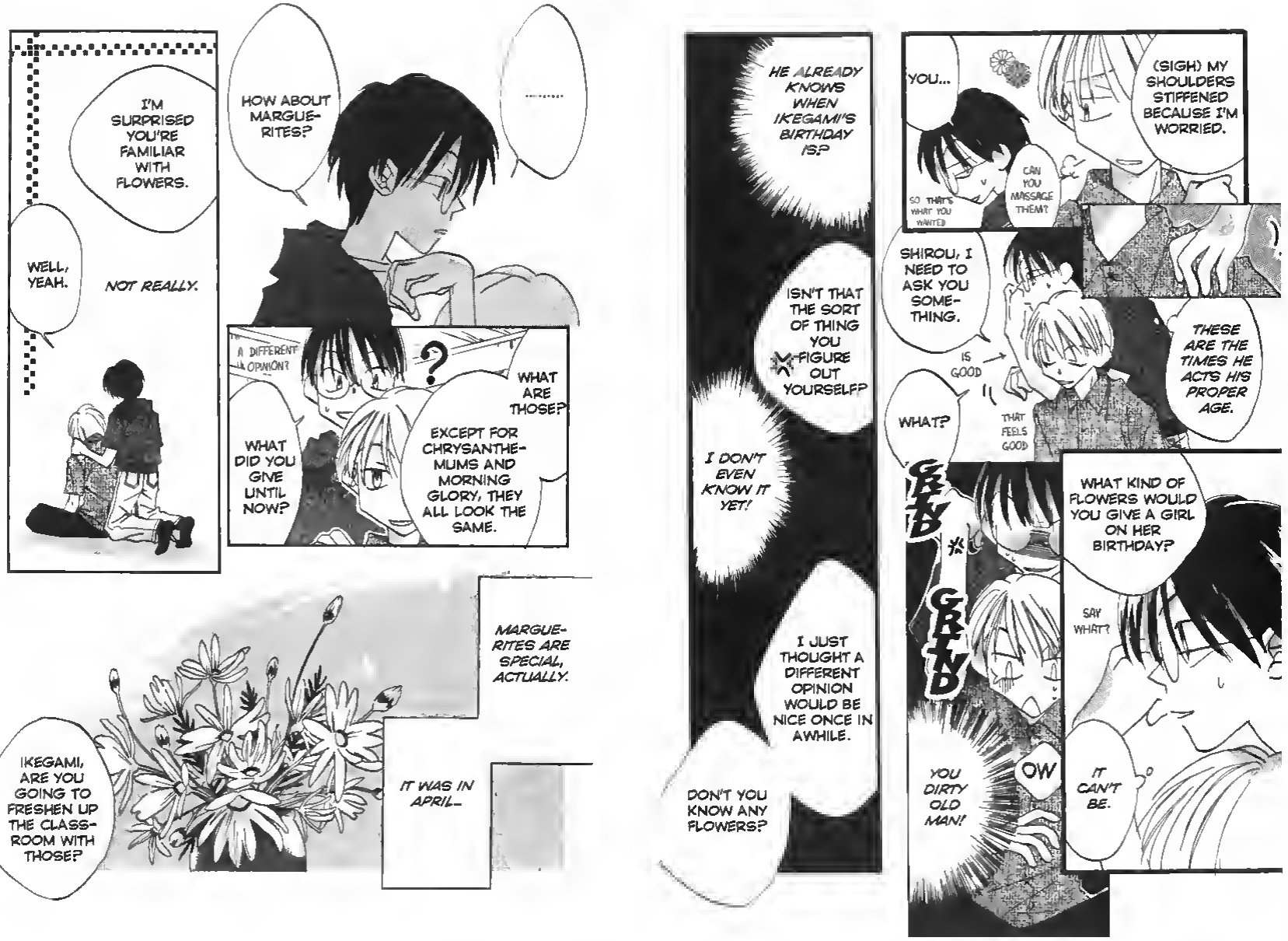
SHE'S DEFINITELY NOT FOR YOU, BUT WRITE HER BACK, OKAY?
RUSTLE
HMM...
REMEMBER THE GIRL FROM MY CLASS WE MET THE OTHER DAY?
IT'S FROM HER.
SHE TOLD ME TO GIVE IT TO MY "OLDER BROTHER."
OH.
RUSTLE RUSTLE
SHE'S ONLY IN GRADE 9.
TRUTH BE TOLD.
THE LETTER WAS WRITTEN BY A GIRL I LIKE...
HEY, IKEGAMI.

SO NOW WHAT?
CAN I COME OUT ON TOP?
NOTHING REALLY.
YOU'RE STARING.
WHAT?
SPIN

MY RIVAL IN LOVE IS MY GRAND-FATHER?!
IT WAS A BIT OF A GAMBLE
BUT I WAS FAIRLY SURE GRAMPS WOULD SAY NO
OTHER-WISE I WOULDN'T HAVE EVEN TAKEN IT TO HIM
IT CAN'T BE.
WHY WAS SHE ALL HAPPY LIKE THAT?
I'VE NEVER HEARD OF A GRANDSON AND HIS GRANDFATHER VYING FOR THE SAME GIRL.
GROAN
GROAN

SHIROU?
HE WATCHES OLD SAMURAI SHOWS AND LISTENS TO OLD FOLK TUNES.
HIS TASTES ARE OLD-FASHIONED, THOUGH.
YOU LOOK TROUBLED. CARE TO TALK ABOUT IT?
ぷよーん
DROP
.....
NAH
NO THANKS.
YOU'RE THE PROBLEM.
YOU SURE?
YOU AIR IT OUT, ALL RIGHT?
GRANDPA'S PET
GOOD BOY
GOOD BOY
HE'S GONNA BE TOUGH TO BEAT.
CAN BE VERY CHARMING.
MY BOY, YOU'RE THE APPLE OF MY EYE.
GRIN

HE'S LIVED A LOT LONGER THAN ME.
TRYING TO REMIND ME IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY SOON?
I GET IT. YOUR ALLOWANCE IS TOO SMALL.
YOU THINK I'M BEGGING, DON'T YOU?
NOT EVEN CLOSE.
GRAMPS IS PRETTY GOOD LOOKING.
HE'S SEEN A LOT.
HE KNOWS A LOT.
176 cm
162 cm
HE'S PRETTY TALL FOR HIS ERA.


I'M SURPRISED YOU'RE FAMILIAR WITH FLOWERS.
WELL, YEAH.
NOT REALLY.
HOW ABOUT MARGUERITES?
.....
A DIFFERENT OPINION?
WHAT DID YOU GIVE UNTIL NOW?
WHAT ARE THOSE?
EXCEPT FOR CHRYSANTHEMUMS AND MORNING GLORY, THEY ALL LOOK THE SAME.
IKEGAMI, ARE YOU GOING TO FRESHEN UP THE CLASSROOM WITH THOSE?
MARGUERITES ARE SPECIAL, ACTUALLY.
IT WAS IN APRIL...
HE ALREADY KNOWS WHEN IKEGAMI'S BIRTHDAY IS?
ISN'T THAT THE SORT OF THING YOU FIGURE OUT YOURSELF?
I DON'T EVEN KNOW IT YET!
I JUST THOUGHT A DIFFERENT OPINION WOULD BE NICE ONCE IN AWHILE.
DON'T YOU KNOW ANY FLOWERS?
YOU...
(SIGH) MY SHOULDERS STIFFENED BECAUSE I'M WORRIED.
SO THAT'S WHAT YOU WANTED
CAN YOU MASSAGE THEM?
SHIROU, I NEED TO ASK YOU SOMETHING.
IS GOOD
WHAT?
THAT FEELS GOOD
THESE ARE THE TIMES HE ACTS HIS PROPER AGE.
GRIND
GRIND
YOU DIRTY OLD MAN!
OW
WHAT KIND OF FLOWERS WOULD YOU GIVE A GIRL ON HER BIRTHDAY?
SAY WHAT?
IT CAN'T BE.

I GET THE FEELING ME AND GRAMPS AREN'T ALL THAT DIFFERENT--AT LEAST WHEN IT COMES TO FLOWERS.
IN OUR GENES?
CHIRP
CHIRP
I THINK WE'LL GET ALONG GREAT!
YEAH... I GUESS.
SHE WAS SO CARE-FREE.
I FELL FOR HER.
I FELL FOR HER HARD.
TAP
HUH?
FOR A BIT.
ARE YOU GOING OUT?
ON A SUNDAY MORNING? YOU NEVER DO THAT.
WELL, IT'S NICE TO DO SOME-THING DIFFERENT.

AREN'T WHITE CHRYSAN-THEMUMS BAD LUCK?
YES. I LIKE THESE.
THEY'RE PRETTY, AREN'T THEY?
YOU'RE SO GOOD AT EVERYTHING YOU DO.
SLAP
SORRY. I'M NOT GOOD WITH FLOWERS.
THEY'RE NOT REGULAR CHRYSAN-THEMUMS!
THEY'RE MARGUERITES!
THEY AREN'T BAD LUCK.
I THOUGHT YOU'D BE MORE CONCEITED.
SO SHE SAID WITH A LAUGH.
BUT, IT'S NICE TO SEE YOU'RE NOT.
I'M SO RELIEVED.
OH. REALLY? HA HA.
TEE HEE
WHY?

I NEED TO FIND OUT!
WHAT DID GRANDPA SAY TO HER?
PAT
SLINK
HUH?
A FLORIST?
HE REALLY DID GO IN.
BOOF

SEE YOU LATER.
WAIT!
I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS...
JUST WHERE...?
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
WHERE?
YOU DON'T KNOW?
I'M GOING TO SEE THE GIRL I FELL IN LOVE WITH.
"WHAT KIND OF FLOWERS WOULD YOU GIVE A GIRL ON HER BIRTHDAY?"
BYE.
RATTLE RATTLE
NOT IKEGAMI?!
WH-WHAT?
SLAM

"I THINK WE'LL GET ALONG GREAT!"
THAT'S ALL SHE SAID.
IT WAS ENOUGH, THOUGH, FOR ME TO START THINKING OF HER.

THANK YOU COME AGAIN
HE BOUGHT MARGUERITES.
YOU'RE KIDDING.
CLONK
THIS IS IT.
CLONK
IF NOTHING ELSE, DON'T WEAR WOODEN CLOGS ON A DATE.
SHE'LL BE APPALLED!
CLONK
CLONK
CLONK
CLONK
SHIROU?

OH.
I KEEP GIVING YOU THE SAME FLOWERS.
HELLO, DEAR.
BUT, YOU DESERVE SOME-THING DIFFERENT FOR YOUR BIRTHDAY.
RUSTLE
SPLISH
THEY'RE NOT, YOU OLD DOG!
ENDED UP BEING CHRYSAN-THEMUMS-- JUST LIKE ALWAYS.
THE KID'S USELESS.
SO, I ASKED SHIROU THIS YEAR.

IT'S WORTH A SHOT, ISN'T IT?
WHY DON'T I JUST ASK HER OUT?
WHY AM I KEEPING IT BOTTLED UP?
WAIT A SECOND.
A CEMETERY?

森山家
PHEW
I SHOULDN'T HAVE SUSPECTED YOU.
SORRY, GRANDPA.
MORIYAMA?

I THOUGHT IT WAS.
TODAY WAS GRANDMA'S BIRTHDAY.
GRAMPS STILL THINK'S OF GRANDMA.
THAT'S WHY I WAS FAIRLY CERTAIN.
I KNEW GRAMPS WOULDN'T GO FOR IKEGAMI.

GRANDMA'S STILL IN HIS THOUGHTS.
BUT, HE SAID OKAY IN THE LETTER?!
THIS ISN'T RIGHT!
IKEGAMI!
YES?
GRANDPA, I'M VERY DISAPPOINTED IN YOU!
GO WITH ME!
DO YOU WANNA GO SHOPPING?
THEN DON'T GO WITH THAT DWEEB!

HI THERE, MISS IKEGAMI.
HI, KEN.
!!
I WASN'T WRONG?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WHY'S SHE HERE?
I THOUGHT YOU CAME TO PAY RESPECT.
WAIT UP!
GRAB
WH-WHAT?
SEE YOU LATER.
THEN, I WAS GOING TO GO SHOPPING WITH IKEGAMI.
I DID.

IT'S YOUR BIRTHDAY PRETTY SOON.
SO, THIS YOUNG LADY WROTE ME ASKING WHAT SHE SHOULD GET YOU.
I FIGURED WE MIGHT AS WELL SELECT IT TOGETHER.
THIS BEING A SUNDAY AND ALL.
THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ABOUT
A PRESENT? WHY?
BECAUSE... UM...
I LIKE YOU.
REALLY
SORRY!
I WANTED TO SURPRISE YOU!
...IF THAT WAS THE CASE, YOU SHOULD'VE ASKED ME DIRECTLY!
IF...
WAUGH!

I DON'T CARE IF SHE LIKES GRAMPS.
AH... WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I...I...
UH... YEAH.
ISN'T THAT SPECIAL?
NOD
I NOW KNOW YOU DON'T TRUST ME AT ALL
BUT, YOU'RE COMPLETELY WRONG, MY BOY
HUH?
I REALLY LIKE YOU.
SO, I CAN'T BEAR TO SEE YOU GO OUT WITH AN UNFAITHFUL DWEEB LIKE HIM!
I'M NOT BACKING OUT!

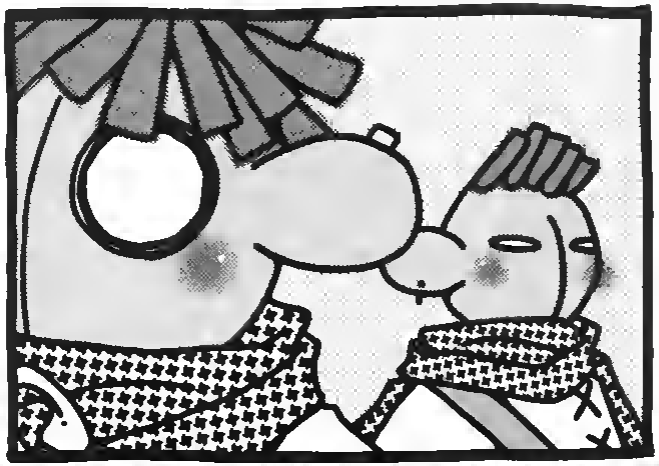
GRIN
BE GOOD TO MY GRANDSON. OKAY, SWEETIE?
♡
MISS IKE-GAMI?
BLUSH
PAT
HE CAN BE VERY DENSE AT TIMES.
BUT, HE'S A GOOD KID. HE'S GOOD FOR A LAUGH OR TWO.
WAUGH
STOP TEASING HER!
YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH!
I WILL.
GRANDSON?
SHINK
COME ON!
GIVE IT A REST, GRAND--
BE!
!

UM...
UM...
UM...
UM...
MORIYAMA?
YES?
HMPH
OH... UM...
I'M SO EMBARRASSED.
I MUST LOOK LIKE AN IDIOT!
YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE ONE.
YOU ARE ONE.
EXCUSE ME.
UNFAITHFUL, AM IT

I DISCOVERED SOMETHING I DIDN'T EXPECT.
IT WAS LIKE THAT IN APRIL, TOO.
THAT'S WHY I GREW TO LIKE YOU.

No.
Date 1999 - 2001

Comments about "The Recipe for Gertrude" and all



About the characters

Gertrude – The hero, although Sahara might get all the good parts if I don't develop the story properly. The pierced one is Mariotte's ear.

Sahara– The scene where she threw the salt in the first story did it for me. I knew then how I was going to develop her character. She's the freest of the characters for now. I guess there really are characters like her...

Puppen and Mariotte– More people like Puppen if they were asked to choose one or the other. I may need to establish a committee to boost Mariotte's popularity.

Curtis– In a word, a hedonist.

Coleman– I based him on my idea of what a New York reporter looks like. Unpopular (ha ha). I was told to give him at least a jacket.

Grandfather and grandson– I liked the name Ken. I was really careful about how I drew Shirou's eyes. Ken's daughter is Shirou's mom.

WE ALL DO.
I'D SAY IT WORKED OUT NICELY.
GOOD FOR YOU.
WE ALL HAVE A RIVAL OR TWO.
I'M VERY GLAD I DIDN'T TELL YOU ALONG THE WAY.
VERY ENTERTAINING
THE PROBLEM IS, HE'S ALMOST 80 YEARS OLD!
IN MY CASE IT'S HIM.
NOW. AND, LIKELY IN THE FUTURE.
MY GRANDFATHER--END.

The Recipe for Gertrude—Part 3

I ran out of time and ended up doing the last 10 pages in 24 hours. I told myself I'd never allow this to happen again. Really.
This is the first time I colored it.
Some people told me they had assumed Gertrude's hair was blond. I can see why though.

The Recipe for Gertrude—Part 4

From around this time, I started making Gertrude's face look sharper and manlier. I think Sahara looks prettier. (I, of all people, should not be saying this.)
Could it be love?
On the advice of my editor, I also drew a lovey-dovey scene for the first time (or at least I intended to). I got all excited imagining it was happening to me (ha ha).

My Grandfather

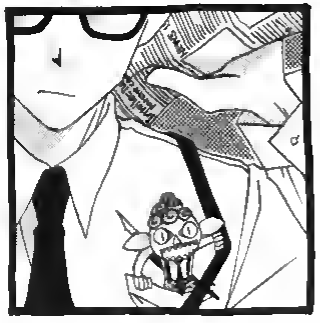
This is my debut work.
I used up 200 sheets of paper for what turned out to be 32 pages. I really put a lot of effort into it, but I wasn't really happy with it. You can imagine how surprised I was when it won a prize. In one of the names* that got rejected, Shirou and Ken were the same age. Ken was pierced with a spear in another.

*Name It's where the story is divided into panels and rendered. It's like a rough storyboard.

About the stories

The Recipe for Gertrude—Part 1

I think it all started while I was doodling and made a demon look sort of cute.
Anyway, I desperately wanted to come up with a story that would even interest me. I also remember faxing my vacationing editor 40 pages. (I was a rotten newcomer.)
I was told Gertrude can be called Gert, Gerty, Trudy, and such. I used to refer to him as the "boy G" as a true Tokyoite would.



The Recipe for Gertrude—Part 2

I was given the go-ahead to do another story. Great! But, I had a really hard time developing the story. His fur-lined coat was popular. Incidentally, I like drawing joints, like wrists, elbows, and knees. (Maybe it's a fetish of sorts.)
I put a lot of effort into Sahara's legs.

No
Date 1999-2001

Thank you very much for reading this. Please send any comments to the following address:
The Recipe For Gertrude
CMX
888 Prospect Street #240
La Jolla, CA 92037

THE TWO CHARACTERS AS RESEARCHERS

To everyone who helped along the way, including...
My editor
Family and friends
Bookstore where I work part time
And liquor store where I do my photocopying...

Thank you very much.

Kusakawa's Notes—End
2001.04.

How do you make a demon? Follow the recipe!

Sahara is a normal high school girl whose life gets turned upside down when she meets "Gertrude," a 100-year-old, man-made demon. Gertrude, who looks and acts like a teen-age boy, was constructed from the parts of various other demons and brought to life through a "recipe" from an ancient spell book. Together, they search for the recipe. What they find may be something more than either of them expected.

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